

ENGLISHMEN AT HOME

BY

NANDA LAL GHOSE,

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PREFACE.

A foreign people cannot be understood in a short, and generally hurried visit ; nor, indeed, can they be appreciated by the oldest foreign resident, unless he will consent to waive all prejudice and live among them as one of themselves. Perhaps, I will not be envied for the experience I have gained. It has been dearly bought,—enforced by protracted illness, and involving banishment from my family and friends, the privileges of society, and even the common comforts of life. I went to England unprejudiced against the people, and lived among them, chiefly in London.

I had no "secret histories" from which to copy, but derived my facts from my own observations. I am indebted to my learned friend, Mr. John Fullard of Birmingham, with whom I lived, moved and travelled in different places of Great Britain and Ireland. I am also indebted for some historical matter to Mr. Edward Leach's "*Sketches of Christian Work Among The Lowly*"; and also to Greenwood's interesting book entitled "*The Seven Curses of London*" which was very ably reviewed by Mr. Spurgeon.

The readers will find in it very interesting and instructive information, striking incident, scenes of thrilling excitement, of touching tenderness, of intensely rude and blunted sympathies and of dark

crime—not concocted in the brain of the novelist, but enacted in the real life of the great English nation such as the Indian mind never conceives.

The book has an interest of its own as showing how English social and moral life strike a foreigner; or rather as showing what are the standards by which foreign writers of the present day should measure Englishmen and Englishwomen. Therefore this book will help a foreigner to learn a great deal more about English social and moral life, as in it the inner life of the great English nation is laid bare. !

The descriptions are weighty; and the readers will find in it how the demon of drink, with almost undisputed sway, rules the masses, and devours them at his will.

• LONDON,
10th May, 1885.

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N. L. G.

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ERRATA.

Page 18, line 22, read "hay-loft" instead of "hay-left."

Page 163, the word "are" is dropped after Englishmen, read "The Englishmen are unmistakably."

Page 187, the word "liquor" is dropped, read "any kind of liquor."

ENGLISHMEN AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

LONDON.

ON the 28th of March, 1883, we entered Dover's giant cliffs, and left Calais harbour without a thought of the chops of the channel, or any other of the disagreeables of life. It is a dull journey from Dover to London, just a dreary drag over a huge flat; monotonous as the clergyman's tones at Droneton-in-the-Marsh, and two-thirds as dull as his of repeated sermons; but London itself is a full reward for all the tedium of the way. London is the metropolis of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. As a commercial and trading city London is complete; it has extensive and well-built manufactories, shops, warehouses, and mercantile firms; and within its limit it contains an immense wealth which all Europe besides could not excel. As an educational city, London, like Paris, is also complete; it has large and well-arranged libraries, colleges and museums of every language, science and art; here the thoughtful observer may study in different colleges and museums, zoology, anatomy, comparative anatomy, Darwin's apedom, diseased pathology, conchology, entomology, geology, botany, hydrostatics, astronomy, electricity, mechanics, and, indeed every branch of knowledge; and his studies may be diversified with wanderings among miles of advertisements and acres of heavy sign-boards. The vain may very easily find in London a feast for their vanity, but the intelligent may be equally content with the feast of knowledge which its splendid colleges and museums afford them. London owes very much to the great fire which consumed its old inflammable houses, and raised a new city of palaces. The event proved to be a sanitary blessing, although it was not appreciated as such. Indeed, religious men vehemently asserted that the devastation occurred as a judgment

against the crying sins of the age, and was more especially aimed at the gluttony of Londoners, since the fire began at Pudding Lane, and ended at Pie Corner ; but it was forgotten that nature awards another kind of punishment to gluttonous appetites which indulge too freely in puddings and pies. Two hundred years ago, London was the most dirty city in Europe. From the time of George the First to the present day the extension of London was carried on at such a marvellous rate, and is still continued with greater zest than ever, so that the metropolis has assumed a character which makes it the greatest marvel of the age. From malarious swamps, and den of fever, it has become the most populous, commercial, wealthy, and largest city in the world. No doubt, from a marvel of foulness it has become the most wonderful city, although it makes one shudder to know that the city abounds with infamy and loathsome vices. Alas ! that a Christian city of high civilization and culture should be so clouded with abounding sin. London, the centre of English enterprise and spirit, the seat of English commerce and wealth, the home of English literature and science, the nursery of English intelligence and civilization, has swollen like dropsy to an enormous degree, swollen by the mixture of prosperity and poverty, virtue and vice, good and evil, right and wrong. It is the haunt of the harlot and the thief. Poverty, with all its variety of filth, hid itself here, that is, poverty shows itself in a horror of every method of commanding public attention. The broken-down and distressed workman, the worn-out, dissipated shoemaker, the intoxicated, rude sailor, and the halt and maimed and blind, who begged in the streets for a living, inhabited its long, narrow, dirty lanes. The victims of whiskey and gin here found an appropriate refuge. The Irish, who huddle together without any sense of decency or domestic comfort, swarmed the ill-ventilated houses. In the summer, numbers died of fever generated by ill-ventilated rooms, and badly-drained closes ! In the winter, the old and tottering were taken off by cold and hunger. London, with its streams of busy life, like mighty rivers, is a seething bog. The poor folks here are like rotten wood, they winna haud the nail ! On the surface London looks like bright gold, but its inner part is rotten, like putrid corpse. Those lines of first-class residences, those long terraces of respectable houses, those miles of pretty villas, those

leagues of busy shops—one rides along them by the hour, and feels that London is great, flourishing, wealthy, orderly; ay, but turn out of that broad thoroughfare, stop at Paradise Court or Rosemary Alley, take your walks abroad where many poor you see, note the ragged children, the filthy Irishwomen, the harlots, the drunkards, the swarms of villainous-looking big boys; and now, as you return, sick from the reek of gin and the mustiness of rags, you learn that London is poor, wretched, lawless, horrible. It is well to have the rose-water removed, and the rose-colour washed off awhile.

The city of London is full of remarkable impressions. Up in the garret of a large high house, were three persons seated on the floor, with a broken bottle and a couple of broken tea-cups. The old man and his wife were in a deplorable condition. Another man in the room was dressed in good black, with "thin silky grey hair falling over a forehead that bore the marks of some culture. This man had been a respectable tradesman, but drink had been his ruin. "Well, John, how are you getting on?" asked Mr. Parker's *cicerone*. "Just gone to the devil again. Master Wright," replied the wizened-face old fellow, as he dropped the cup with its contents from his hand. The wife put herself in a fighting attitude, and dealt out some imaginary blows which were intended to punish the old man for his naughty language, but the rebuke had no effect. The place of a sinner like him, she said, was to sit silent and listen. The old man did not acquiesce, but ordered her to be quiet, which she did with her tongue, but not with her arms and hands, which were still vapoured over the head of John. In another garret, an old woman, who resembled a bundle of rags, was lying crouched in the corner. On the window-sill was a well-thumbed copy of Horace, which was the mental food of the old woman's son, who supported her as best he could on a few shillings a week. An old Irishwoman, whose nose and chin nearly met, and whose "long elfin locks, half black and half grey, gave her a weird appearance," had been found in love with a shoemaker in her old age. This is the universal experience of strange London. There was John Duncan, the bill-sticker, leading gently to grog-shop on Sabbath and week night, his pale, patient, blind Mary, the wife who, even then, washed and baked for him. There, too, was Alexander Thorburn, standing daily at the auction-room door, or at the photographer's with

necklace of pictures ; and his wife, too, that needed all her clear vision, to keep him straight. There, too, was John Bonar, sideling with slow pace into the church, but always there with fresh guilt Bible, at which he looked from an angle impossible to any other eye. No doubt, London is a unique city, comprising representatives of all classes of her Majesty's Christian subjects. The wealthy lords, the proud barons, the covetous bankers, the thrifty merchants, the unhappy workmen, the wretched sailors, the worthless beggars, the half-naked drunkards, are to be found in every street and lane.

With all the sin of London it has a Sabbath ; and the houses of prayer, though not so well attended as they should be, do nevertheless receive within their doors an exceeding great army. When the church was crowded, some of the visitors would peep into the vestry before service, and say, "We have swept the closes clean to-night." There they sat, many of them in rags, some of them unwashed, some brought in from their firesides as they sat after their Saturday night's dissipation. Many had never in their life been within a church door, many had not been for ten and twenty years. And there they sat, as the minister stood up to preach, looking into his eyes with eager search, as if for light, waiting to know if he really has any good news for them. They seemed to say, "We have come for once in our life, at any rate, within your reach, and we shall listen to-night till you're done. Say your best. Do your utmost. We are dead, hopeless creatures. We know we're lost ; you need not tell us that. We believe in hell ; we have been there. But is there salvation for us ?" With such feelings as those, a man cannot preach anything but Christ. Conversions became numerous. A communion class was formed. "I want to be admitted," observed a man, "dressed in blue pilot cloth, with a great shaggy head and a rough weather-beaten face, one eye hopelessly disfigured, as if by some terrible blow." "What makes you press forward to-night ?" he was asked. The reply was, "Seeing so many press into the kingdom, and I'm likely to be left out." Strange ways had some of these characters of expressing the great change which the religion of Christ had wrought for them. "I'm a changeful man," said a noted drunken man, "the guid used to be drooned by the evil, but noo it's floating on the top." On one occasion at the Lord's table, a poor old man

of eighty-one years, admitted there for the first time, took the large slice of bread handed by the elder, and instead of breaking off the morsel, ate the whole slice. "I stopped the elder as he was about gently to speak to him," says Mr. Parker, and said, "Our Master would not take it from him." But Mr. Parker forgets that the Master would have prevented the mistake by breaking the bread himself, as was his ordained method.

These are the sad pictures of the city of London? It is the city of corruption, it is the city of Christian religion crowded with the habitations of cruelty. Its people feed upon provision made for the flesh, and they are armed from the magazine of unsanctified nature; the Old Adam is their father, sin is their mother, unbelief their nurse, and self their captain. For number they are legion, and they prowl in bands, each band doing its best to make havoc of every good thing. They break down the temples of morality, they dig up the wells of vice, they loiter in the streets like packs of wolves and hungry-looking dogs for their prey. Temptations of all shapes barbarously ravage the hearts of London. Flauntily-dressed females, with the sinner's trade stamped heavily upon their otherwise interesting features, are scattered here and there; costermongers with their necks well bandaged by gaudy silk handkerchiefs (which are indispensable to the craft); fustianed labourers who only honour the Sabbath by using soap and water; poorly-clad ragamuffins and boys of various ages, who wriggle into innumerable shapes and quietly poke fun at each other until the policeman manages to arrest their attention.

There are divers things to be observed in modern Babylon. Do you catch my thought? For fear you have not I will enlarge. There are depths in London so low, that some of you have no more idea of them, than you have of the holes of the rats in the great sewers; and in these depths lie damnable curses, deep and deadly, withering and soul-destroying. It is mournfully interesting now and then to walk along the streets of London, and see half-clad, hunger-bitten relics of humanity, men and women, glide along the pavement like ghosts, wearing clothing which even the rag-merchant would not buy; poor, broken-spirited, begrimed, gin-cursed beings, who have not even spirit enough left to beg, but flit along the street, looking like owls in the daylight, as if they were out of their haunts,

and were uneasy till they were back again. Give them a sixpence, and they look at you with surprise, and almost with alarm; and before you can say a word, they vanish as mysteriously as if they had descended through the pavement. In going along the busy streets, we frequently notice a crowd gathered round a fallen horse or a waggon with a broken wheel. It is odd how soon a crowd gathers when there is an attraction; there may not have been a dozen people in the street before, but there will be scores if not hundreds within five minutes if a couple of boys are fighting. Only stand and stare at a smoking-chimney-pot yourself for a few minutes, and see if twenty other simpletons will not come and gaze their eyes out with curiosity to know what you can be looking at. Might not stoppages in a crowd give us rare chances of reaching strange people? As you are surrounded by the mob you readily discover that the rascal on your right greatly admires your watch. When a cheap-jack has a little knot of people round his van, he eyes them all, and feels sure that the man who is standing over there is a butcher, and that yonder young lad has more money than brains, and that the girl near him is out with her sweet-heart and is soon to be married.

For the most part, the condition of modern Babylon, morally and spiritually, is frightfully low. One who has seen it well, has estimated that only about one-fourth part of it is good. The dangers of Hell can be portrayed with a Pre-Raphaelitish and naked accuracy; but it is difficult even to a best painter, to paint the wandering rogues, wanton vagabonds, unrestrained drunkards, hunger-bitten beggars, and shaggy-looking unmarried women. In the heart of this enlightened city, there lurks an undefined and unexpressed vice which is a sheer disgrace to Christian England.

But whence does London derive its black face? How is it that Christian London has become subordinated to gross immorality? The reply is ready to our hand. Drink is the root of its gigantic crimes. Let no mortal man rashly believe himself capable of considering this world and all its goings with a perfectly free and unprejudiced mind. We hold that such virtue has died out, and is lost for ever to civilised society. But imagine for one moment a human being endowed with the reason and understanding, set down, *for the first time in his life*, on the face of this globe—if you

please in the heart of London,—and there left to begin, *de novo*, to make what he could of it; and we predict, with unhesitating confidence, that the first impression produced on his mind would be that this was assuredly the most outrageous, the most startling, of all worlds. And if, carefully concealing from your visitor any apprehension of a superintending and all-wise Deity, you proceeded to unfold to his perception some of the more complex moral phases of human life, we believe that he would come inevitably to the conclusion, that it was not only the strangest, but also the saddest, and altogether a most hopeless world. And in one aspect—on the side of human speculation—is it not, on the face of it, even so? Conceive for one moment of History—and no God? Turn over its pages if you can—and dare—under the influence of that thought; and as you have within you a human heart, you will turn away in sheer despair from the perusal of the tragic tale of mortal misery “too deep for tears.” Light and darkness! These are the elements of History: not softly blending to form fairy pictures, filled with images that inspire delight; but joining issue to produce dire eclipse and “disastrous twilight,” fitted rather to confound. A seemingly inevitable and confused battlefield! A frantic world determined to go wrong. “Sad moral phenomena? Where shall we look for them in the nineteenth century? Perhaps you immediately request us to direct our attention exclusively to the uttermost ends of the earth; and we politely decline to do so. Heathendom we dare say presents a deplorable sight; but what of Christendom? Here are institutions designed—so we are told—expressly for the advancement of man’s immortal weal, and above all, for the benefit of enlightened and happy Englishmen; and among these—strange to say—we find their saddest illustrations of gross moral perversion.

He who wishes for a proof of human depravity, drunken revelry and shameless wantonness, has only to walk through the paved streets of London and watch several grades of cruelty, dissipation, drunkenness, poverty, brutality, ignorance, and blackguardism.

London, the city of infamy and vice,
Is a dark den, where fiends and wolves howl,
Before it “Hell trembles throughout
In all its palaces of fire.”

CHAPTER II.

SEAMEN IN THE DOCKS.

Looking over London Bridge, the eye is arrested by a forest of sails, of all descriptions of dirty drab; by vessels of all kinds and shapes—some of no particular kind at all, and others of no describable shape; by ropes old and by ropes new; by boats crazy and boats that by repainting have had a new lease of life given them; by cargoes heavy and cargoes light; by colliers black and barges blacker; by ruinous, dilapidated wharves, and by a medley of labourers, and sailors, and watermen, and lightermen, and mates professional and mates unprofessional—loafers who find that loafing pays, and others that starve upon it. The sight of industry seems to provoke idleness. One always sees the idlest vagabonds lounging where they may observe the hardest and most busy work. Thus the parapets of London Bridge are invariably, from early morn to dusk, fringed by some of the most depraved and vicious idlers that could claim commiseration or excite disgust. How they enjoy the sight of perspiring labour before them! What rude observations are jerked out occasionally, as if they who were too lazy to work were most competent to criticise those who could and did what it would be a pleasure to compel them to do. More animating and interesting still is the scene at the Docks. One of our first, and most boyish, literary efforts was a description of a visit paid to the London Docks. We have a clear recollection of the dismal, damp wine-vaults through which we travelled—one barrel, we remember, contained 4,500 gallons of port; we walked through one of the immense tobacco-stores, the whole of which will cover five acres, and our juvenile eyes were attracted and delighted at seeing a labouring man shovelling damaged tobacco, on which no duty had been paid, into a huge furnace appropriately designated “The Queen’s Pipe.” The wine-vaults will accommodate 60,000 pipes of wine, while one dock is devoted exclusively to ships laden with tobacco. So bewilderingly extensive is the London Dock that the eye fails to take in all that is spread out before it. The dock contains an average of 240 sails. It must not be supposed that each ship has its crew. The crews are paid off, on the vessel entering the dock,

and only about five or six hands are retained. But the hundreds of men engaged on the docks, and the numbers of seamen in the ships, render this a fine field for the study of character of the "son of the ocean," who has braved many a fierce wind, and has been strong where others would be weak, is weak when he should be strong—unguarded when he should be careful. Alas! poor Jack, his very virtues lead him to vice. His assumed friends, the land-sharks, the wretched women who drug him with their smiles and professions of friendship, make him their prey. He is soon pressed with liquor, and liquor is his curse. He falls into the hands of designing Delilah's, and soon loses that which took him many hours of rough work to earn. Mr. Mayhew, in his "London Labour and London Poor," has very graphically pictured the social condition of this class of men. The picture, we fear, is but too true. "The dock labourers," he says, "are a striking instance of mere brute force with brute appetites. This class of labour is as unskilled as the power of a hurricane. Mere muscle is all that is needed; hence every human locomotive is capable of working there . . . Dock work is precisely the office, that every kind of man is fitted to perform, and there we find every kind of man performing it." And there is a terrible scramble after this employment. "It is a curious sight to see the men waiting in these yards to be hired at 4 pence per hour." It is sad to find how brutal many of the men are, and how depraved and drunken. They reside in some of the lowest haunts of East London—in lodging houses which are a disgrace to Christianity, we might almost say. Yet these houses are somewhat better conducted than they used to be—though imagination fails to picture how wretched their former state must have been. The great body of the labourers, it is sad to learn, never attend a place of worship—are not even visited by Christian men. We have heard of several instances in which those who have attempted to benefit them have been insulted and mobbed. The labourers are, therefore, as might be expected, utterly ignorant of the elementary truths of the gospel. Mr. Splaine says, "A great many of them can neither read nor write, and are as ignorant of Divine things as if they were living in heathen lands. I have frequently addressed from fifteen to thirty labouring men at the dinner-hour on board of ships; and, while they were partaking of that meat which perisheth, I have en-

deavoured to impress their minds with a sense of their need of not neglecting to feed their never-dying souls with the bread of life which cometh down from heaven. My access to these men has been better than what I once anticipated."

Lightermen differ from bargemen in that the latter convey passengers, while the former convey goods from the vessels to the shore, or *vice versa*. Many of them work on Sunday; and consequently never enter God's house. They are more intelligent and less depraved than the dock labourers.

The reports of all the missionaries engaged in evangelistic labour in the various docks agree in their descriptions of the terrible evils produced by drunkenness. Intemperance abounds to a fearful extent among seafaring people. One missionary writes:—"This is not to be wondered at, when it is considered, that there is not a street at this end of London without at least from one to three gin-palaces or beer-shops. Whenever a new street is to be built, the first house erected on it, is sure to be a public house, situate in some prominent place. When a sailor passes by one of these houses, after returning from sea, and hears in one of them some singing and dancing going on, Bill says to Joe, his shipmate, "Come in, and let's go and see what's all this about," and accordingly they go in, and come out drunk and robbed of their money. Many instances of this will be seen at various times recorded in the police intelligence of London papers, but the larger number of cases never come to light.

Here is a sample of the kind of degradation to which humanity will sink. Mr. Splaine, in his last report, wrote:—"It is now over two years since I first noticed an old-looking man, dressed in seamen's clothes, talking very busily at times with sailors, after they were 'paid off' at the shipping-office, adjoining the Sailors' Home. I often endeavoured to get into conversation with him, but found it impossible, as he always succeeded in avoiding to meet me. At last I casually met him talking to a sailor, and gave to both of them a tract; but on pointing out to them the incomparable blessing of being in a state of peace with God, he became very restless and said, "I think it's no matter what religion a man professes, it's all the same thing if he believes that there is a God above. If a man is

a Turk, and believes this, there is no fear of him. I believe that there is a God that rules all things, and do not fear ever being damned, &c. At this time he got still more impatient, and, seeing some sailors passing by, he begged to be excused, and followed them. A few days subsequently one of the shipping masters at the Sailors' Home pointed out this man to me as being the greatest and vilest reprobate in existence. It appears that this old sailor is well known, and lives by 'crimping.' For every sailor he conducts to houses of debauchery, he receives from the inmates a few shillings, besides a stipulated sum he receives from those who become his victims. Many seamen in this way are brought into the paths of ruin; and many a young man, after leaving the peaceful home of his parents, is thus brought to make shipwreck of his soul and body. I meet daily in my work with cases of this kind, and I have no doubt but in a few instances my admonitions have not been altogether, I trust, in vain in the Lord."

The Sailors' Home is an excellent institution. It provides lodgings for seamen where they may be safe from the cupidity and devilish arts of land-sharks. Yet, even here poor Jack is surrounded by these wretched creatures, who, as he is passing into the building, will draw him into their low haunts. A sad case is mentioned in one of the reports, of a young man who was decoyed into a den of infamy, where he spent the best part of three days in drunkenness. The fourth day he was found dead through starvation and ill-usage. A boatswain of a ship was drugged with laudanum in one of these houses. Finding himself growing suddenly stupid, he endeavoured to make his way for the Sailors' Home. He was followed, and was stabbed in his head with a knife. For three weeks he lay dangerously ill. A very large number of the residents in the Sailors' Home are foreigners—mostly German, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian. The German sailors are not easily dealt with by the missionary, since they are fond of reasoning. Many of them esteem the faith of Christians to be little better than a child's faith—grounded on no evidence, backed up by tradition and fortified by the supernatural. In not a few cases the pride of intellect has given way to a lowly submission to the cross of Christ. Many recognise the worldly value of a Christian life. Hence, one of the sailors confessed before his mates that he would rather sail any day with a religious captain

than with any other man. Services are frequently held in this Home for Sailors, and we believe a Scripture-reader labours exclusively amongst them. One of the dock missionaries has conducted a Monday-evening service in the Destitute Sailors' Asylum for sick seamen, for over a dozen years. "The aspect of these meetings," he informs us, "is often such as is well calculated to inspire a true missionary spirit. Here are men from nearly all quarters of the globe, and presenting nearly every shade of colour. Black, white, tawny, and copper coloured assemble here; not infrequently the tear is seen to start, under the power of the Word, and I entertain a hope that much good will be found to have resulted from efforts put forth in this place."

We had thought of concluding this account, by showing the necessity for Christian effort amongst seamen. But the facts we have related are surely the best proofs of the importance of this work. It may be well to state, however, that English seamen are regarded, rightly or wrongly, by the natives of other countries, as specimens of Englishmen. What impressions they leave upon the inhabitants, whilst in the ports of other countries, is not a matter of conjecture. But if they were Christian men, of consistent lives, what an influence they might wield! How much more respected would England be in the eyes of foreigners and savages if, instead of seeing the typically drunken sailor, they were to encounter men who had the fear of God before them. And what splendid missionaries would these men become! Now and then we hear of such sailors. They have been known to hold meetings with their shipmates, to distribute tracts in foreign lands, and to commend the doctrines of truth by their consistent, holy lives. Look, too, at the dangers to which these poor fellows are subject. Here is an invincible argument for evangelistic work among seamen. "The wind," says one of the missionaries, "as it howls around our land-crocodiles, it may be, takes some ship on a lee-shore, and plunges its crew into a watery grave. The statistics given before a committee of the House of Commons some four years since, showed that the loss of life by shipwreck, and other contingencies of sea-life, is as eleven to sixteen in all other causes of death. Whilst writing this report I shudder at the incident which occurred in the dock only four days since. The seamen went to their vessel expecting to sail that day, but were

told by the captain that they were not wanted until the morrow, as the ship would not leave until then. One who was a little in liquor immediately remarked, 'Come on, lads, there is another night's spree for us then.' But these were his last words; for, on stepping from the bulwark to the quay, his foot slipped, he fell into the water, and was taken up quite dead."

CHAPTER III.

HOMELESS AND DESTITUTE.

What would become of London were it suddenly bereft of its street boys? Where would country cousins of Londoners find their amusements, and obtain their captivating stories, were they to loose those volatile creatures of the street? We have recently been laughing at Mr. D'Israeli's epigrammatic description of the discontented imaginative Irishman who lives next to a melancholy ocean. But how often have we had to enjoy the merry pranks of the imaginative boy who lives mostly in the streets! There is no mistaking him. He has become a regular institution. The metropolis would be intolerably dull without him. Were he banished into the country, city men would find trudging through the main thoroughfares that lead to their business, grievous work. No man in his senses would walk down the seedy, melancholy City Road or Goswell Road twice-a-day, were there no boys to amuse him. Were he to try it for any lengthened period, he might be driven to lunacy. The dullest street, and the most antiquated, is lively and cheery when infested by street boys. Muddy roads, tortuous crossings, the discomforts of jolting and squeezing, and elbowing, and the rudeness of men bent on seeking the interests of that selfish person known as Number One, the shoutings of costermongers, the screamings of railway whistles, the terrors of brass bands, and the aggravations of barrel organs, combine to make men as morose as a prisoner under solitary confinement. Talk of the discomforts of the imaginative being living next to a melancholy ocean, what are they compared to the life of

suffering and misery endured by the pedestrian in London? He is doomed to submit to his grievances. And he soon learns to resign himself to the inevitable. He knows what awaits him as he turns good temperedly out of his house in the morning. He predicts what his annoyances will be, and he receives more than he predicts. Yet, he is compensated for his adversities. All is not bitter experience with him. His moroseness—the true city type is only to be found in the city—may be suddenly exchanged for mirth. He has only to keep his eyes open. One unfailling source of pleasantry is free to him. He has but to study the nature and doings of that rare type of reckless, gaiety—the street *gamin*—to get dispossessed of his dulness and to forget his vexations. About these boys there is something I like. For, after all, in these days of stiffness and pretectionsness, there is a charm about these frank open-hearted little fellows. The street boy makes no show of being what he is not. His fellows soon extract all the starch that may be wrung out of him. Has he a fine cap? Some one will be sure to relieve him of it, and make him run half way down the street to regain its possession. Has he a small beaver hat? He must submit to the dignity of its being crowned. Has he new clothes? There is the customary and historical nip for him. For the street boy is a rank tory. He is true to his traditions. He believes in the good old days. Every act of mischief that savours of antiquity, every bit of rioting peculiar to the season, has in him a true conservator. He cherishes in his memory all he has read of the rowdiness of the city apprentices. He has a marked veneration for Guy Fawkes, and blesses the day when “gunpowder treason” does “come once in a season.” He is loyal to the throne, but he is chiefly loyal to himself. He obeys no law but the law of his own will. He has no special reverence for the policeman. Indeed, his delight is to provoke him. He is a terror to that functionary by night, and a source of discomfort to him by day. He has a peculiar gift of chaffing; and drunken men are his victims, and ill-tempered companions the subjects of his practical jokes. No costermonger that dares to leave his truck standing in the street, would run after him; and no costermonger’s truck that comes to grief by being overturned finds its perpendicular, or is again laden with its treasures, without the voluntary and kind assistance of the street boy. There is no fire in

the district which he has not scouted out. There is no procession the date of which he is unacquainted. His knowledge is wonderful. He can direct you to any street or obscure lane. He knows the hotels, the colour of the omnibuses, the path they should take, and the hour of their taking it. He is fond of all the music he hears. No barrel organ plays a tune without the accompaniment which whistling affords. He knows all the street cries, and he deems it his duty to imitate them. He is overjoyed when he can startle quiet people out of their propriety, and make girls scream out in terror. He has no respect of persons. With wondrous assurance he ridicules every swell; and with striking discernment he discovers every fashionable snob. His great fault is that he is too knowing. He has learnt too much. He has a capacity for evil, and too little regard for the good. He is an expert in the one, and an ignoramus in the other. He has flashes of intelligence when in the presence of those who can talk in the language which he has mastered; he is but a dullard when conversed with on higher themes.

Of course, I have been describing the true street boy, whose characteristics are too numerous and varied for further detail. Thousands of these lads live in the streets year after year. Many of them—the errand boys and junior clerks—have homes; a very large number—those engaged in the streets—have none. Some dwell with their parents, cooped up in a pigeon-hole sort of garret, with perhaps half-a-dozen brothers and sisters. Such houses are to be found in those back slums which are never visited by respectability, or in those tumble-down courts which have long been threatened by railway companies, or by schemes for street improvement. Others find their nightly home in some cheap lodging-house, for which they pay from threepence to fivepence a night. Others roam about the streets all day, enjoying what they deem to be a luxurious liberty, searching out some soup kitchen where they may have what they mysteriously and inaccurately term “a blow out,” and adjourning in the evening to the casual wards where bread and skilly, a wash and a bed, are provided for them. It is sad to think that so many consider this to be living the life of a gentleman. They have no sense of the degradation which belongs to their vagrant condition. They look upon society as their enemy. They consider all lovers of law and

order to be meddlers with their liberty, and to have a grudge against them. They dread control, not because of the hardship so much as the bare thought of being curbed. Many of them look upon societies instituted for their benefit as "a sell." They may take the relief offered them with a generous hand, but they half suspect the intentions of the givers. Other boys—and these are characterised by a grimy tint, by a hungry savageness, and by an animal appearance that sends sadness to the heart—live in the gutters by day, and seek refuge in some hidden corner in a stable-yard, or under some arch, or in a retired doorway, at night. Many prefer this method of living to seeking the shelter of the casual ward; and it is certain that they soon learn to be contented with their lot, and think themselves fortunate they are no worse off. These are of the vagrant class—the sons of those who have been styled, "the curs of humanity," those who people the goals and add to the mad-houses.

Out of the thousands of boys who may be said to live in the streets of London, upward of ten thousands, it is believed, are homeless. The question naturally arises—Where do they all come from? Many, of course, are born in London, and are the offspring of those who are paupers and criminals. But, it is to be feared, a large majority of those who make social shipwreck, when boys, are from the provinces. Young lads, by the hundred, are coming up from all towns and villages in England, with the hope of improving their position. It is with most of them a mere illusion. Those who have parents that are glad to get them out of hand, or whose cruelty or carelessness drove them from home, never venture to return to their native place. It is a serious thing—this influx of lads into an overcrowded city. The visions of hope that are turned into the unexpected experience of poverty and ruthless disappointment, are everywhere being indulged in; and the small percentage of success ought to deter youths from venturing where they are almost certain to meet with pitiless toil and bitter sorrow. London is overstocked. I have known gentlemen receiving three hundred letters in response to one advertisement for an ordinary clerk. Country boys come up to town with the hope of getting a clerkship. How can they compete with the hundreds of hungry applicants who are lying in wait, and whose acquaintance with town life renders their chances more pro-

bable? The same complaints come to England from America. There, labourers in the country villages are wanted; but hundreds of stalwart fellows are begging in the cities. One American paper hopes that some "tidal wave" of common sense will sweep over the city—struck simpletons who crowd and jostle each other in the towns, and bear them back to their proper and nobler sphere of duty. Henry Ward Beecher's quaint yet sensible and serious advice deserves attention in England. "Let the city," he says in a sermon to young men, "if it needs you, come and find you. Let the city seek you, and not you the city. Dispel the illusion, and its glory, and its power, and the lying hopes with which it beguiles you. Blessed are they that, being born in the country, know enough to stay there."

A plain matter-of-fact view of the present condition of the homeless boys of London is perhaps the best that could be taken. These boys should not be constant drains upon the purses of the charitable. They should not be relieved by every little society, or every small mission that pauperises those whom it aids. The truest philanthropy is preventive and remedial. Here is an immense waste of human life and energy. What is to become of these lads if they are permitted to seek their livelihood in the crowded streets, and are helped by those who only partly relieve them? Night refuges are invaluable, no doubt; but one fears that they encourage the evil rather than retard it. At least, they must do so of necessity in some cases. There are numbers of boys, observes the *Times*, "tossed loose on the world to be maimed, crippled, diseased, and killed off before their time, and instead of being made into intelligent men, to be crushed into troublesome animals." Something more, then, than mere temporary help is required. The raw material should not be left to polish itself. There is no chance of such a boy becoming a useful and respected member of society unless he be taken in hand and cared for. The providing of sleeping accommodation will, undoubtedly, be the means of keeping him from those contaminating influences which the "Amateur Casual" described so painfully a few years ago. But more than this is wanted. Who is to do it, and how is it to be done?

These two questions occupied the thoughtful attention of a gentleman whose life has been devoted, with an earnestness and true-heartedness perhaps unparalleled in modern philanthropy, to the

social and religious improvement of the juvenile waifs and strays of the metropolis. It is to Mr. William Williams, the Secretary of the Refuges for Homeless and Destitute Children, that the success of the movement now in so flourishing a condition, is mainly due. His name will ever be honourably remembered as the founder of one of the most beneficent enterprises ever conceived for the rescue of neglected and wretched children. We have no great sympathy with those who refuse to give a fair meed of praise to honoured men who have richly deserved it. And since Lord Shaftesbury has publicly recognised the invaluable services of Mr. Williams, and his intelligence, zeal, and activity, for the public good, we need not be abstemious in the choice of congratulatory words with reference to his services. The highest praise, however, which a Christian man can have is not in the plaudits of an approving public, but in the blessing which the Master gives, and gives, too, in the success of the labours undertaken. Mr. Williams and his fellow helpers have the satisfaction of witnessing results which probably they little anticipated when first commencing their humble efforts for the redemption of the wretched boys and girls of London.

It would be impossible to picture the utterly wretched and lost condition of the homeless and destitute children. There was no school for them. A hay-left over a cow-shed was secured, and fitted up as a school-room. This room was opened in 1843, and was the first Ragged School movement in St. Giles. Not much help was afforded at first, but the seeds were sown for a large and abundant harvest. The origin of the work was therefore very humble, and the appliances more than usually simple. The history of the growth of the movement would be very interesting, could it be given in full. But this is impossible in our pages. "The effort," Mr. Williams states in one of his reports, "may be compared to a young tree, having been planted by a few of God's servants, in faith and hope; it soon became manifest that it had taken deep root, and year after year it was evident, the dew of heaven was not only nourishing the parent stem, but all the branches thereof." And now that other branches have been added to the old trunk, the desire of the committee is realised, since they believed the tree has "attained those dimensions which can be properly superintended so as still to keep it healthy, and its branches flourishing.

The good old trunk has two large and distinct branches, with a number of smaller twigs on each. There is first the Refuge Work, and secondly the Ragged School operations. We shall content ourselves with merely giving a general and brief survey of the work of the Society, and a detailed account of what we have seen of the operations carried on in the several Refuges.

The Refuge Work is conducted in various places, and is the largest in London. One hundred boys are housed in Great Queen-Street; two hundred are located in the Farm and Industrial School at Bisley, near Woking. In addition to these, there are two homes for girls, which have been exceedingly useful in training them up for service, and in preventing them taking that downward course which leads to the ruin of body and soul. The work of the Society may be fittingly described by one word—it is “thorough.” The boys in the Refuge are clothed, lodged, and fed. They are taught the three “r’s,” and taught also how to spell those “r’s” properly. All the inmates are present morning and evening at family worship. They also attend Sunday School and Divine Worship once on a Sunday. The desire of the promoters of the Society is mainly religious; and no effort is spared to bring them under the sound of the gospel. That many of the lads are lamentably ignorant of all Scripture Knowledge is not to be wondered at. Some have no sort of reverence for sacred things. A story is told of a city Arab, who was evidently an ardent admirer of what he considered to be heroism, and well acquainted with the language of prize-fighters. The ragged-school teacher was interrupted constantly whenever the stories of patriarchal heroes were related to him, by disparaging comparisons with Tom Sayers. “Moses and Joshua was all very well,” he is recorded to have said, “but what was they to that little chap a-standing up as game as a bantam cock before that great, thunderin’ yankee, and a knock-ing of him down like a ninepin? Bless you, Noah and all that lot weren’t fit to hold a candle to him. He war a hero, he war.” Another lad at an examination, on reading of the “wheat and chaff,” referred to in Matthew, defined the “chaff” as “impudence.” But it is unnecessary to quote instances to prove what is so sadly notorious a fact. It will be seen that with the ignorance these poor lads manifest, they display no ordinary acuteness, which, under proper management, may be made to bear useful results.

It should be stated, lest our readers labour under a not unnatural misconception that the Industrial Schools' Act—a truly beneficent measure, which has worked admirably—does not meet the bases of the poor boys and girls of London. We believe there are only two such schools, certified under that Act, for the whole of the metropolis. "These schools," we are told, "receive about forty boys each, and have been full for some time with cases sent by magistrates; and as the managers of two of those schools, receive six shillings per week per head from the Government for every boy received under a magistrate's warrant, it follows that a poor boy voluntarily seeking a home in these Government Certified Schools, has very little chance of gaining admission. Moreover, the Act makes no provision for a boy if he is over fourteen years of age. Now, it is a fact which cannot be disputed, that there are in this city from all parts of the country, a very large number of boys without home or friends, over the age of fourteen years, and for whose welfare no provision is made by the Government, unless they steal and are taken before the magistrates for the offence, and then they may be sent by the magistrate for three or four years to a certified reformatory, and maintained at the expense of the State." The stipendiary magistrates are, however, exceedingly loth to send a boy to a reformatory, and seem to prefer sending him to a goal. And to do this, is practically to ruin the lad for life. Of course, this does not hold good in the country, where magistrates send lads to the reformatories more frequently, and for the most trivial offences. This not being the case in the metropolis, what is to become of a boy who finds himself homeless and destitute in the great world of London? There is no Government help by which he may be prevented from falling into crime. The State only assists criminals. A boy unconvicted of crime, is, however, admitted into the Refuge on his own application. He goes to the Secretary, who never turns a lad away from the doors of the institution, however full the house may be. The lad, Mr. Williams tells me, would lose all heart, were he held in suspense; and delay would be dangerous. It is presumed that it requires some courage for the applicant to make up his mind to leave his vagrant life. He is, therefore, taken while he is in the humour. The Secretary receives him, and then makes all useful enquiries, rather, as he says,

than keep him out of the Refuge, exposed to starvation, until the enquiries, have been made. Nor can there be two opinions as to the urbanity and wisdom of this course of procedure. Upward of 246 boys sought and found a home in the Refuge in 1880, while 117 had remained from the previous year. A society that can thus rescue and educate, clothe, and provide a trade for 363 boys in one year, and afterward procure for them a situation, is one that is doing the Divine Master's work. It should be added that the boys are admitted either on their own application, or on the application of those who are interested in their welfare. The Society is in communication with all the casual wards and night asylums of the metropolis, and from these a large percentage of the inmates are derived.

What may be regarded as the crowning act of the committee occurred in the year 1866. Early in January Mr. Greenwood's vivid and touching picture of a night spent in the casual ward of Lambeth Workhouse, published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and from thence copied into nearly every paper in the Kingdom, sent a shock of horror through the country. It may be said that scarcely any article, or series of articles, ever produced so great an impression as those of the "Amateur Casual." One of the members of the committee considered what might be done to rescue the boys who were found in such resorts. As the result of his deliberation, a supper was announced, for the 14th of February. Two hundred ragged urchins came. We have several reports of the event, which we have preserved, and from these we cull a few items that will be read with interest. It appears there would have been a much larger attendance had not the lads mistrusted the promoters of the banquet. Some refused to go on the ground that there would be "lots of aw and nothing to eat—only skilly." The average age of the lads was about nine or ten years. They were deplorably wretched in appearance: clothed in rags barely sufficient to answer the purposes of decency; they had skin diseases in the head, some were cripples, others were suffering from illness, or were half-recovered from fever. One account says:—

"All degrees of destitutions were represented. A few had homes, but 'father' was blind or out of work, and they were left to pick up a living as best they could. But, 'father and mother both dead'

was the common story, with now and then, as a variation, 'Don't know nothin' on 'em; haven't seen 'em for ever so long;' or perhaps, 'Don't never reck'lect seeing 'em'. One little fellow, when asked how long he had been without a home, made answer simply, with evidently no suspicion of its pathos, 'Always'. He had been born in a work-house, and his mother (his father he had never known even by name) disappeared before he was well weaned. Many of the boys—almost all under sixteen years of age, the average being about twelve or thirteen—had slept the night before in one or other of the casual wards, or in a 'cheap lodging-houser; but not a few had spent the night in the streets. Four came in together—a wretched, unkempt group—who had slept under the piazza at Convent Garden. Two had crouched together in a half-finished sewer. The 'shutter-box' at Drury Lane Theatre had been the bed on which another slept. Of costume, there was every variety. Some were in tatters from head to foot, so that it was a marvel how the 'looped and windowed raggedness' was held together." Plainly there was a great effort made to keep up the appearance of the regular number of garments—at least, to have some sort of coat, if only as much of one as a collar, with a slit back and part of a sleeve. One wore a robe of sackin'g like a poncho. But in one or two instances, a poor child might be seen shivering in only a ragged shirt. Shoes, too, were quite *de rigueur*, but such shoes! the soles loose, the sides gaping—the whole ruin bound together with pieces of cord lest it should drop to pieces. Of the supper itself much might be said. Half a pound of good cold roast beef, with large piece of bread (about twice the size of the casual 'toker'), washed down with a cup of coffee, was a meal so lavish and luxurious, that at first it almost awed them by its magnificence. Indeed, for awhile, except for the clatter of knives and forks, and the conversation of the visitors, there was comparative quiet. Even when the shyness had worn off, the business on hand was too solemn and important to admit of idle talk, which, besides, was a waste of time. As the plates were cleared, tongues began to loosen, and when large dishes of smoking plum pudding (a pound to each allowance) appeared, there was a tremendous cheer. They had come for gruel, and had got beef and pudding. It was a sad sign that many of these poor boys did not yield to their appetites, but saved the greater part of the

pudding for another meal. Except a few of the regular tramp order, who had pouches knowingly contrived in their tattered raiment, most of the lads were puzzled to know how to carry away their surplus, and bits of newspaper were gradually received. Nothing could be better than the behaviour of the company. There was no quarrelling among each other as to who should be helped first, no invasion of each other's dishes, and they showed considerable conscientiousness in passing up the shares first to those who sat near the wall and distant from the waiters. They were quiet and attentive when addressed by Lord Shaftesbury and other speakers, and joined in the singing of a hymn decorously, and with evident enjoyment of the music. At the end, fourpence-a-piece was given them to pay for lodgings."

Of all the inscrutable mysteries of social life, nothing excites one's wonderment so readily as a piece of patchwork. First item of astonishment is, how came these varied-shaped, many-coloured, and colourless fragments of silk into one person's possession? On this point you may exhaust much, if not all, your native ingenuity; and so ere you reach item No 2, you are baffled, and what John Ploughman (begging his pardon) would probably call "moonstruck." And, query the second is equally difficult of ascertainment. How came the pieces—having found their way into close association—to be fitly joined together and neatly arranged, with taste and judgment sometimes, and in violation of both generally? By what magical process were they brought together in such wondrous harmony and disharmony? Silks of all sizes, shapes, hues, qualities, thicknesses, all forming one happy family; suns, moons, stars, and stripes, diamonds, peacocks, fern-leaves—every conceivable pattern, and some woefully bereft by age of all discernible pattern—here is a pretty conglomeration which no man can understand. Were they united in this ill-selected marriage by some ill-natured spinster fairy, who had a spite against mankind, and so with wondrous wand, called into existence these mysterious quilts, in order that when some poor wretched bachelor lay ill in bed, the patterns might present a confused jumble to his eyes, like pieces of glass in endless tortuous confusion in a kaleidoscope, and drive him fairly out of his wits, if a confirmed bachelor ever had any? Were they the invention of certain, poor, money-expecting relations, who wished

to drive some penurious rich uncle out of the world, when he had the misfortune to fall ill ; or by the sight of these dazzling colours and absurd patterns, to send him out of his mind and thus qualify him for a lunatic asylum, and qualify themselves for participation in certain funds ? I don't know ; only—here is the greatest mystery of all—how any man can get well again after studying for hours in bed these fantastic exhibitions of misapplied genius and industry ?

Why I should be thinking of patchwork while walking through Lincoln's Inn and certain adjacent streets, may not be very clear to the reader, and is not altogether so to the writer. But he who wanders through some of the London streets—especially in old localities where modern improvements have been made—will not have failed to be struck with their patchwork appearance. The Zebra style of Gothic architecture is confined to churches and suburban villas that are built for cheapness and gaudy effect. The higgledy-piggledy style of no-architecture is truly British and essentially metropolitan. Everybody has the right to build differently from everybody else, and neighbours, duly respecting their privileges as free-born Britons and thinking that variety is charming, are determined to be as opposite in their tastes and wants to the builder of the next house as they can well be. Certain dingy, parti-coloured, half-modern, half-antiquated houses near Lincoln's Inn Fields—such fields ! the breath of the lawyers having withered all vegetation—are undoubted evidences of the variety of mind and taste to be found in the human species. Society is a piece of patchwork ; the houses in which society dwells are in the patchwork style of building ; and in the houses, the eye is haunted by the same proof of passionate love for innumerable bits of absurd, bungled shreds of wearing apparel denominated patchwork.

In one of these streets, which bears emphatic evidence of the decay of time and the renovation of modern times, is situated a somewhat faded-looking shop devoted to the exhibition of strong-made boots and shoes. A boot shop is never a bright spectacle ; for boots are only bright in their polished state—and that is not even *skin* deep. Unusually interesting, however, is this boot shop. Over the lintel of the door you read the announcement, "Refuge for Homeless and Destitute Boys." You ring the bell. "Is Mr. Williams here, my

little man?" You ask a pleasant-looking lad, whose hair has asserted its right to aspire as high as its length will allow it, and whose general appearance bears that semi-official character which is only gained by the performance of onerous duties. "Yes, sir," replies the juvenile porter, as he closes the door with due propriety, and struts forward with the air of a *bourgeois*, to inform the good Secretary that a visitor had come.

Looking around you, you see in a large, well-ventilated room, a number of boys, seated on shoemaker's benches, with their "kits" by their side, hammering, stitching, cobbling, nailing, waxing, pasting, and rasping; all done in a workmanlike style, and in such concert that the effect can best be described as shoemaker's music, the music of lapstones, delightful to hear—but only once in your life! You are in the midst of a busy hive, in which none are drones. Every boy is a king on his throne, and though it is only a cobbler's throne, it is, to these lads, an elevation from their once lowly condition. You are struck at once with the cheerfulness and the alacrity of the lads. Had they nothing better to look at than each other they might grow melancholy and misanthropic; but with a boot on their lap which by incessant, pleasant labour, is growing into shape and fashion, and with contentedness in their hearts, and with a foretaste of a coming dinner, the fumes of which are already filling the room, it would be strange indeed for them to be unhappy. And yet there is a sign here and there in some of the little workers of past neglect and sorrow; marked indications in old-fashioned faces and furrowed cheeks of a bygone period of misuse of youth that, thank God, is not the experience of universal boyhood. For though these boys are now housed and cared for, and nourished by comforts to which they once were strangers, yet human philanthropy can never perfectly restore the handsome face, blooming sweetness of youthful innocence, and the childish vivaciousness which seem to be quenched in the lives of these "old boys." Poor creatures! They have certainly lost somewhat of their once normal shagginess; their hair is no longer matted and uncombable—each hair has been brought into that condition of things in which it has to fight for growth independently of working its way through a thousand other hairs and intertwining itself with a mass of other locks in inextricable confusion. All

that has been remedied. Disease and the rapid inroads of decay have been stopped; but the traces are left behind. The future alone can prove that they can ever be thoroughly erased. It requires no great discernment to be convinced that these lads would probably have been found in goals had they not been rescued from the streets. They have not yet lost, though they are losing, that appearance of viciousness, that look of dogged sullenness indicative of early suffering and misery and hatred of society which, if permitted to ripen as years bring on to manhood, blast every moral feeling and blunt every tender and healthy susceptibility. How can these youths cherish kindly sympathies when they are left without a glimmering of that "light and sweetness" which cultured minds and sanctified hearts alone can impart to them? What parent reading these lines has not sought to turn the precocity of childhood into the highest advantage? As soon as he catches—

"Imperfect words, with childish trips,
Half unpronounced slide through the infant lips,
Driving dumb silence from the portal door,
Where he had mutely sat two years before."

he begins to observe the growing powers of the infantile mind, and to surround that mind with all the objects and lessons and actions which shall stimulate healthy enquiry and develop the finest, tenderest feelings. But what of the child who never had this machinery of education before it? The sparks of whose natural passions were from the first, fanned into a flame, and that flame, as years went on, blown upon till it reached a height of revengefulness, which wrapped the soul in a fiery atmosphere of evil, until it became an incipient hell! No example to check the evil passions of youth—no faithful loving hand to deal with the follies which seek to work their way into the core of the young heart!

"Like caterpillars, dangling under trees
By slender threads, and swinging in the breeze,
Which filthily bewray and sore disgrace
The boughs in which are bred the unseemly race—
While every worm industriously weaves
And winds his web about the rivell'd leaves;
So numerous are the follies that annoy
The mind and heart of every sprightly boy."

And yet there is no one to "watch his emotions and control their tide." Every evil passion is allowed to have its course unchecked; precocious evil is laughed at and admired; sin is encouraged, and the sinner patted on the back! What after-education, I ask, can bring innocence back?

Observable as all these sad traces are, there are signs of moral improvement in these once wretched Bedouins of London. They evince no small pleasure at the kindly look of a stranger and his approving word. This is an advancement. Once they cared for no smile, and disregarded all frowns. They have lost that Ishmaelitic feeling—that capacity for unnatural hatred—that sense of extreme isolation which drives all sympathetic feeling from them. As you see them associated in groups at their work, the pleasant conversation and brotherly interest in each other's labour prove that they can be raised above the selfishness of their nature, and that viciousness is not so ingrained that it cannot be overcome.

You do not see the lads to best advantage, so far as personal appearance is concerned, while they are shoe-making. Any clothes are good enough to work in. But there they are to the very life—street boys, with the marks of street life upon them, put to interesting work, which they prefer to their old idling courses. Naturally some take more kindly to the work than others; some get a passion for the labour which elevates them, and others learn more quickly, and reach perfection sooner than those who are more dull and less receptive. So it is everywhere. The cases of failure are not, however, numerous. The lads readily learn, and if one branch of labour does not suit them another is chosen. All the boots required for the boys and girls in the Refuge are made on the premises, and all the cobbling needed is done by the boys.

Behind the large room in which these youthful cobblers are plying their trade is a carpenter's shop, a large and spacious apartment, and also a tailors' class. All the boys' clothes are made and repaired in the Refuge. There are also other occupations, such as mattress-making and wood-chopping. In one corner is the large cistern for bathers, the watter presenting a very different appearance to the "mutton broth" of the casual wards. Upstairs we are introduced to the culinary apartment. Preparations were being made on a large scale for a grand dinner to poor children, who were expected to join the inmates of the Refuge. There was a fine joint of beef—real Christmas beef (it was only a few weeks to Christmas). Such a joint deserved the hurrahs of the hungry youths. The matron was superintending the arrangements, and some of the elder boys were serving (as they always do) as cooks. And capital cooks they seem to be, having a

true discernment of the nature of the attentions required to make the food presentable and eatable : they are assiduous, clean, and tidy. All the boys spend several hours of the day in reading, writing, and arithmetic. They have a schoolmaster : the reading book is the Bible, than which no better could be had ; and every effort is made to instruct the lads in those things which may fit them for the duties and responsibilities of life, and lead them to the higher world of thought, where the noblest passions are enkindled and the purest motives are gained.

The stories of the lives of these lads present many features, of painful interest. I have been favoured with a batch of them in their own hand-writing. The first on the list was born in Homerton Union ; he never knew his father ; his mother died through drink, and was buried by the parish. He then lived with a brother, who turned him out of doors because he would not sell matches. He went again to the Union, and was taught in the school there a year. Then he ran away, and occupied the post of a boy who had fallen sick, in a stable-yard, until he recovered from his illness. Subsequently he was required to apprentice himself for seven years to the owner of a fishing smack ; but, deeming that too long a service, he refused, and was lodged in the Boys' Refuge. This lad's writing is very creditable, and his sentences are not badly put together. Another boy lost father and mother when three years of age ; another's father died some months before his birth. Another boy's story is to this effect :—His mother and father died in a workhouse. He then went to work with his uncle in the stables. He would not, however, mind what his uncle told him ; and he says, " I had to leave home on account of my being so wicked to my aunt. I used to go of a night and sleep in the cabs, and I then got too dirty to obtain a place, and so ragged, that I had to go to the workhouse again." Afterward he tried to find some employment, but failing that he begged from house to house for bread. Another boy has a father still living, but he does not know where. " I have no others, no aunts nor uncles to look after me, I am sorry to say." He had to tramp in early youth on the road ; then he did some market gardening in Colchester. This boy seems to have tramped a good deal, but now he thanks God, he says, for bringing him where he is cared for, and kept from the streets and starvation. And we thank God, too.

Other stories reveal the same state of things. Parents who have thrown their children upon the tender mercies of an unsympathetic world; parents who have died, in pitiless neglect, in crushing sorrow; mothers who, in bringing more children of poverty into the world, have gone out of it unwept and unlamented; mothers whose child was their shame, and whose shame urged them to forsake the inheritance of their sin; fathers whose brutal sottishness had almost quenched the light of the soul of their child, and whose neglect had forced it to starvation; relatives whose love of strong drink had dispossessed them of all tenderness of feeling, and whose crimes had divorced them from the children they should have protected—children who have been trained up for the same evil courses which they have so readily pursued, and for which they have been so severely punished. O God, what a long and miserable catalogue of the fruits of sin!

Pitiful, indeed, is the confession of some! "My mother," says one, "is in an asylum, and my father ran away *because they were never married*. They could not agree with one another, and when I was out I used to go and beg my bread." But enough!

Not far from the Boy's Refuge is the Home for Friendless and Destitute Girls. The building is an exceedingly suitable one, and is situated in Broad Street, Bloomsbury. Here 100 girls are housed, educated, and cared for. On the ground floor, a ragged school is conducted; above is the school, where the inmates are instructed in writing. The girls are decently attired, and as clean as Quakeresses. They are of various ages, and sizes. Not a few bear the marks of hunger and want, which it takes some time to wear off. Some appear as if all childhood had been crushed; others, dull and heavy-looking, seem as if they had never known what it was to laugh. These girls have been rescued from miserable homes in filthy courts. Two lived with their father, and slept in one room with other children and with one or two married couples. Others have been taken from abodes and associations of the vilest character. It is sad to think how many thousands there are of poor, poverty-stricken girls in the metropolis in the same condition, growing up to swell the ranks of a class "sinned against" and "sinning." The efforts of the society, important as they are in this branch, are necessarily on a small scale compared with the great multitude who need aid.

The committee feel that some plan ought to be carried out on a large and adequate scale to educate and train the girls of the poorest class of society. What they have done is creditable to them. They have a suitable Home at Ealing, in addition to the one in Bloomsbury; and we are told that "the girls in both Refuges are provided with a plain, but useful education, based upon sound Christian and evangelical principles; they are also clothed, lodged, and provided with three meals a-day. Domestic service being the ultimate object for which these girls are educated and trained, they are of course, taught to do all kinds of household work, such as washing, cooking, cleaning, &c. Their own clothes are also made and repaired by the inmates. "The making of shirts for the boys, not being a part of the tailoring business conducted in the Boys' Home, is undertaken by the girls. A portion of the washing, as we saw in the washhouse below, is done at the Broad Street Refuge by the girls, but the greater part, together with the washing for the Boys' Refuge, is done at Ealing. This, of course, is a great saving to the funds of the institution—worth about £325 a year. And as washing is, thank goodness, an exclusively feminine accomplishment, the girls are very happy and delighted with it, having mastered its mysteries, and compassed its difficulties. The dormitories are unusually comfortable and pleasant—"sweet as a nut" we believe is the right expression—the very pink of perfection. We were shown—tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon—the wardrobes, where the girls stow away their Sunday clothes, with such unapproachable neatness. We observed select apartments which are intended for grown-up girls who may sleep here when out of a situation, and while they are seeking another. For Mr. Williams is wondrously indefatigable. He follows up the girls, knows all their histories, peculiarities, (shall I add) little vanities, and when they are put out to service, his knowledge of them still continues. So it is with the boys. For he is no more secretary, with a quill pen behind his ear, and bound hand and foot with red tape. The secretary of such an institution as this, should have a real, loving soul—a true man, with a large heart and a tender spirit. The very smiling looks of the girls and boys, as he approaches them, indicate his popularity.

To the boys again. In 1881, a new country home for the boys was opened at Bisley. A small farm of eighty-eight acres has been

purchased, to which all the young and weakly boys are to be transferred from the London Refuge, so that they may be trained to look after cows and pigs, grow vegetables, till the land, and so be fitted for work either at home or in the colonies. This is a further extension of the work of the society. We have not said anything yet of "Chichester" training ship, on board which are 150 boys who are being brought up for the royal navy and merchant service. This branch of the society's efforts is naturally popular with the boys, most of whom are filled with grand ideas of the unknown blessings of sea-life. It has also been immensely popular with the public, who hitherto have not failed to support it. "A large number of the boys are most eager," we are told, "to enter the Queen's service, and certainly some twenty more would have gone into that service, but were rejected because the certificate of birth could not be produced to show the age of the boys. This was for the time of a great blow to the boys, and damped their ardour to serve their Queen and country. However, the committee are informed that the lords of the admiralty intend to rescind the regulation requiring the production of this certificate, and will shortly pass an order authorising the entry of boys into the royal navy on the boys own declaration of his age, and his willingness to serve for a definite period. The committee are therefore thankful that the door will soon be open for the admission of the "Chichester" boys into the navy, who come up to the age and standard height required by the Admiralty regulations, because so many of the lads wish for that service, and for some it is the service above all others which is best for them."

One of the wretched lads referred to by the amateur casual on his visit to the Lambeth night wards known as "Punch." This lad was taken to the Refuge, and he is now apprenticed to a boot-maker in Africa, where he is doing well. Altogether upward of 314 boys have emigrated to New Zealand, Canada, United States, Queensland, Nova Scotia, South Africa, &c.; 304 have been placed in situations at home; 153 have been restored to parents and friends; 80 have entered the merchant service, and 46 into the navy:—317 girls have been sent to service, and 222 have been restored to their friends, while others have emigrated. We conclude by giving two cases of some interest, representative of others

which the society has provided for. The first is the case of a coloured boy, once a slave, who was found by a silversmith in the city, wandering about near his shop.

"The very fact of seeing a lonely little black boy sauntering about the streets was sufficient to attract any one's attention. But some how or other, many of these poor outcasts seem to be passed over unnoticed, but in this instance it was not so, for the heart of the citizen was moved with compassion for the little African, and finding from the boy how matters stood with him, he sent one of his shopmen with the little fellow to the Refuge, where he at once found a home and friends. The account the boy gives of himself is this:—He says he was born near Charleston, South Carolina, United States. His father and mother, with a brother, and his father's brother, were brought from Africa, and sold to the owner of a plantation not far from Charleston. There were nearly four hundred slaves on the estate, who were all freed by the war. He gave a very graphic and interesting account of the ecstasies of these poor slaves when they heard they were free. On the happening of this event, the father and mother, with this boy, another lad, and the father's brother, left the estate and went to Charleston, where the father obtained employment. After the parents had been some time in Charleston, the father took the fever and died, and a year or so afterward the mother was carried to her grave by the same dreadful malady, thus leaving this little one an entire orphan, and quite alone and friendless, for his brother had gone to sea, and his uncle had returned to Africa. He gave a touching account of the character of his mother, especially in teaching him to pray, and when asked what she taught him to say, he repeated in a calm, orderly, and reverential manner, the Lord's Prayer; and when asked what else his mother taught him, he said she told him to be a good boy, and 'den de great Farder would be a fadder to me when she was gone,' and when asked who the great Father was, he said 'God.' Poor little fellow, who could help feeling for such a friendless boy? Finding himself alone and destitute on the death of his mother, he set out for New York in the hope of getting a ship there, and working his way out to the Cape of Good Hope, where his uncle had opened a barber's shop. He did not succeed at New York in meeting with a ship, so he went to Boston and other

sea-ports with the same result ; at last he managed to reach Quebec, where he induced a captain to let him work his way to Liverpool. On arriving there he was told he had better get to London, so some one put him in the 'straight road,' as he called it, and in ten days he reached the great city. He fared pretty well on the road from Liverpool, but on reaching London he was again doomed to disappointment for although he went to the docks he could induce no one to take him to the Cape. He tried to get in at the Stranger's Home and the Sailors' Home, near the docks, but both these doors were closed against him, and so he had no alternative but to wander about, and after doing so, and being utterly destitute, the great Father, whom his kind mother told him would be a father to him, inclined the heart of the gentleman before mentioned to take pity on the boy, and send him to the Refuge, and here he is a happy and contented lad. May God bless him, and make his stay here a real blessing to him.

The second case is that of a soldier's girl :—"The father of this child entered the army when young. After a few years' service he obtained leave to marry. He served with his regiment in Ireland and various parts of England, and on the regiment being ordered to Australia, he and his wife accompanied it. While in Australia the poor man had a slight attack of paralysis through a sun-stroke, as it was supposed, which for a time disabled him, but he recovered pretty well from this calamity, and remained well for some time, when it pleased the disposer of all events to allow him to be afflicted with a second attack of paralysis ; this disabled him from duty, and shortly afterward his mind became affected, and he was ordered home to England. When put on board the homeward-bound vessel, he was a confirmed lunatic. A great change had now come over the lot of the poor soldier's wife. When she arrived with her husband in the country she was now leaving, everything looked lovely, but now all her hopes were blighted, and she was returning to England with a maniac husband and three dear children, to exist upon the husband's pension of ten pence per day, earned after serving his Queen and country for more than twenty-one years ! Could anything be more melancholy for a woman, left too as she was without any relation or friend

of her own! On the voyage the poor mother lost one child, which increased her sorrow of heart. On arriving in England, the poor woman, after a good deal of trouble, found out her husband's native place; she managed to get him there, but he died shortly afterward. After husband's death, the mother tried to keep herself and ~~two~~ fatherless children by field and other work, but it was a very sad affair, for her husband's pension had ceased, and there was nothing for her and the children to exist upon. The clergyman of the parish appears to have been kind to the woman, and at length admission for the boy was obtained in the Duke of York's School. The poor woman brought up the boy to London, but as he was an entire stranger, the clergyman wrote to one of the city missionaries to meet her and put her way to find the School at Chelsea. This he kindly did, and then finding she was here in London without a friend, or a home, or the means of procuring one, he sent her to the secretary of the Refuge, in the hope that the little girl might be received. She came very late at night to the Secretary's residence, and the result was that the child was admitted. The joy of the poor woman when she received an order for the girl's reception into the Refuge was great indeed; truly the widow's heart sang for joy. Does it not seem a cruel thing that no government provision is made for soldier's daughters? why should there not be a school for girls, similar to the Duke of York's school for boys? The poor woman is still without a home, and has to resort to a Night Refuge for shelter; and then to walk about all day, as she is turned out every morning at eight o' clock."

Many of the poor lads grow up and obtain good positions in life. Mr. Brock once met a physician, riding in his carriage, who had been a refuge boy. Of the institution, we may say, and greater commendation could no man give—*The blessing of God is upon it!*

CHAPTER IV.

* HOMES WITH NO NAME.

One summer evening, the writer, with three metropolitan ministers, visited and inspected one of the several homes for fallen women which philanthropy has opened for their reformation. The

home is situated in one of the healthiest suburbs of London, not far from one of the stations of a branch of the Underground Railway. Exteriorly, there is nothing to indicate the purpose for which the building is applied; a wise and delicate feeling having decided that the name of the institution should not appear on the outside of any of the homes. The external appearance is therefore not distinguished from any of the surrounding houses, all of which are of the comfortable, old-fashioned type of family residences. Inside, the houses have every convenience, and the dormitories are clean, well-ventilated, and remarkably tidy. The kitchen gardens and small orchards attached to the houses—for there are three of them—add to the healthiness and picturesque character of the homes, of which one, that is kept distinct from the others, is used for convalescents, or young women of good character on their discharge from hospitals. As far as may be, the homes are conducted on the principle of a private family, and are under the care of a matron and assistants.

Of course the women and girls are not kept here in idleness. To do that, would be to offer the best incentive to return to the evil habits which have so degraded them. They are trained as laundresses, an occupation to which they seemed to have taken kindly. We visited the commodious shed in which they were busily at work. They had been previously singing, and at the request of the Secretary, Mr. Thomas, they struck up some popular revival tunes, which were rendered with some spirit and sweetness. Indeed, one was surprised that, after exposure in the streets, winter and summer, they should have retained that melody of voice which is the attribute of girlhood. The girls—for many of them could hardly be called women—were tidily dressed, were mostly physically strong and healthy in appearance; and those who had marks of past excesses upon them, seemed to have very little else in their general demeanour which would indicate a low type of morality. Indeed, the younger and fairer looked so much like respectable domestic servants, that it was not unnatural that one of our friends enquired of the Secretary whether all had been rescued from a degraded life. The sad affirmative answer spoke volumes as to the misery and the disgrace through which girls so young had passed. Our visit was simply an informal one, and therefore addresses were not expected; but at the desire of the young women, one of our number ventured upon a short address, in which

the story of Christ's love was presented in winning simplicity of speech. Of course, no reference was made to the particular sin that stained them; and no air of superiority was assumed by the speaker, who addressed them as one sinful creature would another. And so, after prayer, and the singing of another hymn, and the enforced promise of another visit, in which desire the inmates unanimously joined, we left the building feeling profoundly grateful to God for the Christian generosity which had enabled men of wisdom and discretion, to enter upon a work so humane, and Christ-like, and difficult.

Difficult! Perhaps the most difficult upon which a man can enter, and certainly the most difficult on which a man can write. And yet silence on such a delicate subject, however appropriate, seems almost criminal. To condemn, as some have done, those who fly from so unsavoury a topic, as one studiously to be avoided, argues rather a brutish judgment; it is simply to abuse that delicate sensitiveness which is one of the charms of a pure and gentle mind. That few care to mention the evil, and fewer still to discuss its indelicate details is evidence, not of a disposition to tolerate it, but of a desire not to become acquainted with the secrets of so intolerable a vice. While there may be some sad consequences arising from ignoring the question, there would be infinitely worse evils as the result of exposing it in all its ghastly organisations to the innocent mind. So insidious a form of evil is not to be lightly regarded, or a full knowledge of it to be desired. We are so persuaded that harm may be wrought by the suggestion of such a vice to virtuous minds, that we have long hesitated to take up our pens to advocate the reformation of its victims. We write the subject most reluctantly because of its difficulties. But since the sin of which we write is so increasing, and its victims in London are growing in numbers, and since the exertions which Christian philanthropy should put forth are so imperatively necessary, and so inadequate, we venture in terms as delicate as the English vocabulary will allow, to deal with the subject.

We do not care, to quote statistics relative to the number of abandoned females in the metropolis. Their number may almost be said to be legion. Nor is it necessary for our purpose, which is to show what is being done by willing workers to check the evil, and

to reclaim to virtue those who have fallen. There are several societies devoted to this good object, and it is not due to forgetfulness of their respective claims, but to the small space at our disposal. Nor shall we quote anything too sensational for belief; a report of ~~one~~ society we notice, indulges rather too freely in statements which are manifestly preposterous, with regard to the early age at which children are led into ruin. The bare facts of the case are, alas! sufficiently startling, without believing all that an excited imagination might deem to be true. We may say that all the London societies aim to effect the rescue of the soul as well as the body of the sinful and the wayward women received into their homes, so that their work is pre-eminently Christain.

The "homes" of the London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution owe their origin to the earnest efforts of the deceased wife of present secretary, Mr. Thomas. In a very interesting memoir of this good lady, we learn that prior to her marriage with Mr. Thomas, and while labouring for the maintenance of the children of her first marriage, "she resolved to dedicate some given portions of her time and means to the especial service of God, and in such a manner as should benefit the most unhappy and distressed of her own sex. How far she succeeded in her design, not by her own unaided efforts, but by enlisting the sympathy and support of Christian friends who rallied round the cause inaugurated, may be learnt from the fact that by the agency of the institutions with which she was immediately connected, no less than three thousand five hundred friendless and fallen females were rescued from their hazardous and degrading positions."

In 1850, the public were shocked by learning the awful fact that forty thousand women in London were gaining their living by vice. Christian gentlemen banded themselves together, irrespective of creed and denomination, to organise such means that might, with God's blessing, allay the evil. The existing penitentiaries were good enough in their way, but it was felt that any new attempt should assume a somewhat different character. The work should be specially of a missionary nature. It was not enough to rescue poor girls from moral degradation, the claims of Christianity must be recognised, and a truly evangelical and evangelistic spirit must be infused into any new effort that might be made. Mrs. Thomas, in

the spirit of her Master, sought out the poor fallen of the streets, and notwithstanding her limited resources, gave those who were anxious to reform, a shelter in her humble home, until the time had arrived when a better asylum could be afforded them. Two cases that came under her care were exceedingly hopeful; the young women shared the provisions of her home, but declined firmly, yet respectfully to enter a penitentiary. These cases were constantly occurring. And why? Well, why do poor people dislike a workhouse? And why do boys dislike a reformatory?

The conviction gained ground each day that reformation could not be effected apart from certain modes of treatment. The sinners must be treated with generous kindness, with Christian tenderness, unpatronisingly, as fellow sinners, not as deeply degraded ones, almost beyond the Saviour's pity. The gentlemen were puzzled how to attain so desirable a consummation. It needed a woman's skill and heart, and tact, and instinct. The woman was not wanting at this crisis. Mrs. Thomas, writes Mr. Ireton, "grasped both the principle and detail of a scheme which met all the requirements of the case: it was the establishment of 'Homes,' which should be regulated after the true domestic English pattern, based upon sound moral and religious principles; she further proposed that each one should be under the care and control of a suitable person, who could exercise a sound discretion in the treatment of each individual case." The plan at once found favour with the gentlemen engaged in forwarding the work, and was adopted, at first of necessity on a limited scale, and Mrs. Thomas was appointed the matron. So successful has this model been—a very simple one, it is true, but perfect in its details—that during the past eighteen years, upward of twenty similar homes have been founded in the metropolis, in addition to others in the provinces and abroad. The society was fully organised in 1857. It was soon found that the work needed considerable tact and discretion. Only look for a moment at the faces, at the stern, resolute, obstinate, dare-devil appearance, of some of the walkers in the streets, and ask yourself whether, the task of their reformation is not difficult! The new matron had her difficulties; but it was just there where she was strong. If some stubborn girl had succeeded in causing discontent in the minds of the other inmates, and a desire to return to the old habits, the matron would go and

. dwell for a time in their midst; and her personal influence, and sympathy, and considerateness soon won the hearts of the most complaining. She recognised, indeed, a fact which must be considered in dealing with these cases—namely, that, however depraved the victims of this sin may be, there is one principle which they cannot resist. It is the principle of LOVE. “What!” I think, I hear a reader exclaim, “love in such polluted creatures?” Here is a case, told me by the secretary, which will illustrate our position. One of the vilest women that ever came under his notice was proof against all entreaty, all appeals, all warnings. She seemed more like a resolute fiend than a woman. All moral feeling was gone, irretrievably lost. Any number of English gentlemen would proclaim her case hopeless—and would regard her with dismay and disgust. As for affection, it seemed stamped out of her nature; she seemed incapable of loving either self or God. But was it so? There was an old handsome cat hidden in the corner of her room upon whom she lavished all her affectionate attentions. Of this cat she was passionately fond. You might endeavour to converse with her upon any subject, but the conversation was sure to be interrupted by certain appreciatory remarks relative to “pussy.” That was apparently the only tender point in her character; and to succeed in arousing her to a sense of her condition, it was necessary to do so by expressing admiration for her favourite cat. Similar cases might be adduced to prove that women, however fallen, must have some one or something on which to bestow their shattered affections. The gentle way in which even the commonest of this class will pat or stroke a horse, or affectionately regard the misfortunes of a little child, or caress a babe, is proof that to love is natural with every woman. Woe be to the foul wretch who blasts that tenderness of feeling and quickness of sensibility which elevate so nobly every innocent woman!

It is, above all things, necessary that those who seek to restore the fallen should have large-heartedness, to enable them to deal generously and affectionately with their pupils, and also great faith in God. Without love, they will repel those whom they seek to influence; without faith, they themselves will be speedily discouraged. For the work of reformation is not effected in one day. There are many things to unlearn, many evil thoughts, many old and ensnaring associations from which to break away. The old

paths of sin are fascinating even to those who have been cruelly crushed therein. The old habits, even to those who have most suffered from them, allure their victims to yet further ruin. "The process of unlearning—of discovering the real character of that which appears so glittering, and the sad issues of that which ~~is so~~ revolting—is painful. And in acquiring a taste for virtuous pursuits, and a love for that which is good and true, there are many things to learn which are not altogether easy of acquisition. A very tender hand, and an affectionate, generous heart, and a self-denying spirit, are needed for this work. Mr. Ireton's encomiastic picture of the late Mrs. Thomas's life graphically illustrates what we mean. "She had witnessed," he says, "the worn and wasted form of what was once the masterpiece of God's creation sink beneath the accumulated weight of pestilential disease, and with a tender and a pitying hand had moistened the parched lips of the dying Magdalen. She had administered to the temporal necessities of the poor dying one, but there was a deeper mine of sorrow she could not touch, compared with which mere bodily pain was soon forgotten. It was the loud and angry surges of the mind, when in full contemplation was opened up before it the horrors of a long life spent in the pursuit and propagation of woe. When, in the fever of delirium, the memory gave up her dead, and all the terrors of life's guilty past were lived over again, and as the soul awakened to each new sensation of suffering, things long forgotten re-appeared armed with new pangs. Terribly lengthened the nights became as these scenes moved in slow and dreaded vision before the guilty sufferer, threatening, like the floodings of an ocean, to overwhelm the prostrate one in full despair. Slowly each succession, arose, passed, and died away, like the marching of some mighty host, until, in her last extremity, the poor wretched victim saw a sea of upturned faces, and heard the sound of many tongues, like accusing spirits, calling down the wrath of God. In broken and incoherent tones were these sufferings told, nor told in vain. A faint glimmering, like the smallest streak of light in a darkened sky, alone lit up the midnight of scenes like these." Who will not say, with such facts before them, that it is only Christian women of great faith and generous love who can expect to be successful in tending to such broken-down and broken-hearted women?

And what was the result of this loving attention? Was it possible with women whose finest emotions had been benumbed, if not almost extinguished, by indulgence in a vice so dreadfully hardening, that any change could work so great a miracle as to inspire the heart with gratitude, love, and devotion? Many think such cases are hopeless, and some are tempted to brand all reformation as sheer hypocrisy. But thank God, the fears of the timid and the sneers of the ignorant are not always fulfilled. We learn that in the last illness of Mrs. Thomas there was quite a pleasant competition as to who should watch by night at her bedside; and it would appear that nothing less than a system of taking their turns would satisfy the claimants to this honour. And when she was buried a crowd of weeping mourners, bitterly grieving over the loss of such a friend they never had before—a friend better than some of their own mothers—a friend such as some had never possessed since a mother's death—testified in tones of anguish and sincerity to the love they bore to the sinners' friend.

I have purposely lingered over the history of the founder of these homes, because it illustrates points of importance in relation to this blessed work of restoring the fallen which could not be better described. Such persons as the founder of these homes are needed in every city or town where the wretched and forlorn congregate; but such persons are rare.

Since a second article is needed fairly to deal with this subject, we shall leave for the present the question of *prevention*, which enters so largely into the operations of this society—a question so pressingly important as to demand a separate article for its discussion. In no evil is the old proverb, "Prevention is better than cure," more true. It is here where the first efforts of all Christians should be exerted; for the helpless, the ignorant, the neglected, and the abused, should be protected against the machinations of the destroyer, and the evils that daily surround them.

Difficult as the work of the reclamation of the abandoned may be, the reformatory institutions have been greatly useful in restoring such persons to society. Were their funds larger, they might be more successful; for hundreds of poor girls anxious to abandon their evil courses cannot find an asylum in the homes. They are already full; and this fact must greatly depress, if not altogether

ruin, the prospects of these poor creatures. As samples of the kind of work which has been done, we will give a number of instances selected from the reports of some of the principal societies.

While many trace their fall to their own tendency to evil—and it would be foolish to shut our eyes to a fact so palpable—yet in a very large number of cases, destitution has been the leading cause. This destitution has been aggravated or caused by other circumstances. It is rare indeed, to find a woman in poverty resorting *at once* to immorality for her livelihood. The mind must either have been corrupted, or the affections enslaved and perverted, or the opportunities for sin so irresistible, that to decide for evil was not difficult. Here is a case, however, which is not uncommon. The girl who relates the story was not more than fifteen, and had not therefore led a long life of depravity. Her father was a plasterer, afflicted with rheumatics, and being frequently out of work, was very poor. She could neither read nor write. She did not know her own age. As for a place of worship, she had never been inside one. Her knowledge of Christ and of His gospel was therefore *nil*. Her mother was a swearer, a drunkard, and a brute. In the miserable room which served as an apology for “home,” there was no furniture save “an old bedstead and straw bed for mother, one old table and some old chairs; me and my little sisters laid on some straw in one corner.” “In the winter,” the girl relates, “when father was out of work, I would go and pick up chips and wood, and go on the cinderheaps and get the cinders and little bits of coal to make a fire. We never had but one meal a day; it was no use asking for any more, we know’d we couldn’t have it; mother would only hit us if she was drunk.” The girl added, “that when she obtained her first situation as a servant, she had to go home to sleep late at night; and then I’d be very sleepy in the morning, so as I couldn’t wake; mother would throw water on me and I’d have to get up then; but many’s the time it’s been four o’clock, ’cause we hadn’t a clock, so I had to walk about till six”—at which time she was expected to commence her morning’s labours. After awhile she slept on a box in her “missus’s” house and had one shilling a week, which her drunken mother would try to get from her. Three years she stayed at this place, but one day she went out with a companion for a holiday, dressed

in a new blue bonnet with a rose in it, and furnished with pocket money. Alas! her companion took her to one of those dancing places that are the hot-beds of vice, and introduced her to some young men with whom she was acquainted. "I liked it very much," she says, "but I kept asking about the time, but they cheated me—told me it was only half-past ten when it was ever so late. I went to missus in the morning, but she wouldn't have me again. So the girl and I took a lodging at a coffee-house, my clothes soon went, and then we were turned out. I used to sleep on doorways, and once I seed my mother on a Sunday; she had a dish of baked 'taters and a breast of mutton carrying home. I was so hungry, and I asked her to give me some, but she wouldn't give me one 'tater even." The day she entered the "House," she had not a bit to eat for three days. Her story was found to be true; her mother was all that she had represented her to be; and the state of the room just it had been described. She is now a domestic servant, in good position, and gives every satisfaction. Who can wonder that, in such cases of gross parental neglect, where girls have been trained for sin, and have never heard loving words, they should listen to the allurements of false affection, and fall victims to honeyed speech? Upon whom can the burden of their sin fall, but upon the parents who make these children domestic drudges, and buffet them about, and brutally and coarsely assail them?

It must be remembered too, that in many instances girls receive no education whatever, excepting what they may pick up in the streets; and living in the midst of the vicious, they are trained for evil courses. And life in the streets has a peculiar fascination for those accustomed to it, which even moral reformation will not conquer. A water-cress girl had been reclaimed, and after leaving the "Home" was placed in a situation. "After years of privation and discomfort, the kitchen must have been a palace to her, but her wandering life had charms which no comforts could equal; in a week or so she disappeared. Months passed, and her clear voice was again heard singing her cry of 'fresh water cresses,' but now she carried a small baby as well as her basket. She had married a dustman! Often she sends poor fallen girls to the Home, or gives them leave to sleep in a corner of her poor room, sharing

with them her hard-earned crust, and in her homely way giving them the very best advice."

Illustrations might be given of the power of the gospel over the lives of these girls. Such cases are the best evidence that could be adduced in favour of the present methods of working adopted by the societies. The question is sometimes asked, Are the conversions real? Is the reformation permanent? Why not? If the grace of God can convert—as it has done—depraved men, why not depraved women? If it be possible permanently to reform rakes—a task harder than the reformation of the other sex—what is there in the life and character of woman that is proof against the influences of morality? Some return after awhile to their vicious courses, but at least seventy-five per cent. of the cases undertaken by the societies turn out to be permanently good. Seven years ago, a woman attended a midnight meeting, and was led to abandon her old life. For two years she sought forgiveness, and ultimately realised it; and for more than five years she has been a happy wife, and a member of a Christian church. And in a letter to a Christian lady, she breathes this aspiration:—"I long to love my Saviour more, for he has done for me more than all my earthly friends could or would have done. Jesus has brought me out of a burden of sin and misery, and made me happy, and fitted me for his blessed presence, that I may not only be with him but like him, pure and holy." This communication is but a sample of others received from time to time by those connected with these excellent institutions.

CHAPTER V.

THE YOUNG MEN OF LONDON.

WHAT becomes of the large numbers of young men that annually swarm to London? Do they all obtain the prize for which they struggle? What is the history of those hopeful sons of pious parents who quit the serenity of a country life for the external sensuousness of a metropolitan career? Do they religiously attend to the last parting injunction of their godly sires? Do they strengthen the churches, overcrowd the temples, assist in the works of charity, or

forward the home missionary enterprises ? Do they become studious, thoughtful, earnest, holy—a standing protest against the sins of the age, the evils surrounding them ? Do they retain their native simplicity, and exhibit to their neighbours the grandeur of a true and honest life ?

I confess to answer these questions makes one's heart ache, yet answered they must be some day. We have been too reticent respecting the almost universal departure from virtue and goodness which the young men of this gay metropolis have so sadly shown. And truth to tell, we do not know all the evils which infest them ; we involuntarily shrink from learning more than we already know of the prevalence of wickedness. Yet a little enquiry made of competent authorities would reveal that which, if known, would make the ears of every Christian man in England to tingle with shame. *That enquiry ought to be made by the ministers*—who have the best opportunities for understanding human nature—and who, under God, are best fitted to stem the torrent of pollution which rolls down the abyss of Time like an infernal Niagara, irresistibly sweeping away for ever every honest purpose and good intent formed in hours of solitude and hope. I am not about to indicate what that enquiry should be. But one may safely observe that the proportion of young men who attain the ambition they seek is remarkably small ; that the history of their lives is not pleasant to think over ; that they do not continue to be susceptible to noble influences, nor do they strengthen, but sometimes greatly weaken the churches.

A sad picture ! Yes, very sad ! And sad scenes have I seen of ragged, diseased, and embrutalised men, who once came to London with every prospect of prosperity, usefulness, and respectability. Thieves' kitchens, and common lodging houses receive them, and they soon become the demoralised occupants of a home common to the vagrant and social outcast. Nor is the tale of the hospitals less deplorable ; and, alas ! there are the unrecorded horrors of the lunatic asylum.

The first steps in the sliding scale of wickedness are easily, sometimes unconsciously, taken. The attractions of the midnight streets, of worldly society and pleasures, however soon become irresistible. Yet a warning, friendly voice heard when conscience is quick and tender, might turn the current of the stream. Young men are

impressible, are worth being impressed, and can easily impress others. The great crying want of London is for godly young men of *intellectual competency*, who know how to do battle judiciously and fearlessly with the evils which beset young men. The existing types of ignorant street preachers, whatever may be their services in other directions, are of no use for this purpose but to do immense mischief.* The mere bawler of fervent emptiness belongs to a past generation, and his work, in London at least, is done. London wants such preachers whose minds have been deeply imbued with the doctrines of divine truth, whose ordinary acquirements have been such as to warrant their teaching others—men of sterling, sound sense, shrewd in practical matters, and ready to meet the ungodly with heavenly wisdom. The question therefore arises, how are these men to be produced? Some of them are earnest, loving souls, whose society is devotion itself. They *will* speak; they should be encouraged to do so; and if by means of catechumenical and Bible classes they can be assisted in developing their natural abilities, or if by means of elementary instruction they can be fitted to bear the responsibilities of teaching their fellow-men, then in God's name let the work be done. It should, however, be distinctly understood that the exigencies of the present day require much more than a mere superficial acquaintance with Biblical doctrine, argument and criticism. The children of this world are wise in their generation, and it is piteous to witness, as one frequently does, a poor brother driven to the most ridiculous subterfuges in answering a street opponent, when he might readily, had he been possessed of an ordinary stock of Scriptural knowledge, have silenced his "knowing" antagonist.

There are organisations in action at the Metropolitan Tabernacle which have for their object the association of Christian young men for purposes of evangelistic missionary labour, and also for instruction in the leading truths of Scripture. Of the class for the latter purpose I have something to write on this occasion. Mr. Spurgeon, it is well known, has a genuine sympathy with many points in Presbyterian modes of working. Through some conversation he had with Dr. Fletcher, he became impressed with the importance of

* These words may seem harsh, but harsh facts prove that illiterate street preachers have done irreparable mischief to open air missionary operations. It is only honesty and kindness to say as much.

having a class at New Park Street Chapel, for the study of the "Assembly's Shorter Catechism." A class of young men—there were but three at first—was commenced under the direction of Mr. Henry Hanks, one of the elders of the church. At first it assumed the character of a Bible Class, having as one of its primary objects the study of the Assembly's Catechism, without proofs, so that the young men might be induced to search the Scriptures for suitable passages to prove the truth of the answers given. Born under the invigorating influence of Divine approbation, all the organisations at the Tabernacle thrive vigorously. This daily progression or continuous growth is the most marked feature of the College, of the Evening Classes, of Mrs. Bartlett's and Mr. Hanks' classes. The members of the latter class soon grew in numbers, so that a large room had to be obtained: this too was subsequently filled, so that the landing and staircases were crowded. Best of all conversions came. A holy spirit of enquiry was manifested. The doctrines of grace were better understood and loved. Then came the exodus to the Tabernacle, where the class meets in a room which, large as it is, is now too small for the numbers that assemble every Sabbath afternoon.

Half-past two! and here are a number of men, some young, others middle-aged, with cheerful faces, recognising each other at the chapel gates. They are all "brothers," and they feel the relationship to be a close one. They take their positions around an elder, whose business it is to hear them repeat the catechism. Some may think it *infra dig.* to do that which was a task to us in our boyhood. But these brothers are impervious to shame when their souls and minds are to be benefited. And so, raw and polished, young and old, poor and respectable, all join in a common duty, and feel how good a thing it is to understand, better than they have hitherto done, the mysteries of the gospel-kingdom.

It is three o'clock. The large room is comfortably filled. [There are over two hundred names on the class-books.] The catechumenical elder—Mr. White—has performed his part, and waits for the President of the class to do his. Meanwhile the room is getting filled by the members, who are mostly constant attendants at the Tabernacle. There are not a few strangers, for some young men are inviting all the shuffling street idlers in. Some of these strangers look

uncommonly wretched, compared with the bright, cheerful smiling faces of the "regulars." There is a little singing—and true, boisterous, hearty singing it is too—then a short, pointed, earnest prayer mainly for the conversion of the impenitent and careless, and a lesson follows. One or two young men engage in prayer. The appeals are concise, impassioned, brotherly. Mr. White pleasantly announces the question from the catechism for immediate answer. A young man gets up and makes the necessary answers, not without blundering here and there; for a few weeks ago this good brother—a poor labourer—scarcely knew his alphabet. Another follows and does the business thoroughly. Mr. Hanks then enquires whether some one would state his experience as to the usefulness of the exercise. "I will do so," emphatically replies one honest-looking man. "Before I joined this class I knew but little of the doctrines of grace, but now I understand them, and the learning of the catechism has been much blessed to my soul." Up rises a second, and gives similar testimony, and another and another—all blessing God for the opportunities afforded them, and rejoicing in the good effected by the means so well put forth by the worthy President. Then the Divine Word is read, a few earnest, faithful comments by Mr. Hanks follow, and the members are invited to say what they think about the lesson which has been given them. The subject was the deceit which brought such serious consequences on Ananias and Sapphira (Acts V.) Some of the comments were exceedingly pertinent and devotional, others were grotesque and fanciful, but the practical duties of a religious life were almost universally enforced. One good brother saw in the lesson the importance of greater liberality in Christian beneficence. He had thought about the subject during the past week, and resolved to deny himself more than he had done for the sake of assisting the College. Another young man thought the awful lesson read should lead them to greater consecration of heart and life to God. Another urged the wickedness of vainglory, illustrating his moral by an anecdote told with singular honesty. He reckoned himself to be a good workman in his trade, and had fallen into the habit of claiming superiority over his shopmates. The sin in this he strongly condemned. You may smile, my dear sage, so did I; but these smaller details of daily pride are only unimportant because our consciences get corroded. But the great

argument was that hypocrisy—hiding part of the truth—was especially detestable among Christian men. And while the concluding words of prayer were being pronounced, a solemn feeling possessed the soul, like unto those occasions when God speaks in the whirlwind of warning, or the still small voice of entreaty. Well, thought the writer, may we all be better men for this afternoon's study!

Concerning this class, I may say, that Mr. Hanks is the President, Mr. Bowker the Vice-President, and Mr. White is the teacher of the Catechism. Three earnest men, therefore, join together in a work which has a wide-spreading influence; and to use an undying figure, they move round the centre planet with charming harmony of spirit; for when Christ is to be served, unity of purpose is as "the music of the spheres." The same affectionate feeling prevails among the members of the class, and practical proofs of attachment have been given to the conductors of the meetings. No institution, however, is largely valued at the Tabernacle unless it assume a practical form. Every organisation must help the Pastor's College, and right royally is that assistance given. Mr. Hanks informs me with feelings of satisfaction that the fund for the support of the College for the last half-year amounted to £25, and there is every prospect of a much larger sum at the half-year ending at Christmas.

A large number of the class are now members of the church, and in fact three or four join every month from its ranks. Several have entered the College, and are now studying for the ministry, and others are settled pastors. Of course a larger number devote themselves to active labour in the Sabbath or Ragged School, or other branches of useful work; while some preaching stations are supplied by young men who belong to the class.

A motto is given every Sabbath, and in many cases God has savingly blessed it to those who have sought his face. There have been some striking illustrations of the omnipotence of Divine grace in the hearts of those who were "out of the way." A poor labouring man was invited to the class one afternoon, and desirous of not being observed, he sat in the corner of the room. An earnest brother very fervently supplicated for an unusual blessing, especially for the stray sheep. "Yea, Lord," added he, "do bless *the man in the corner*, and save his soul. The expression was simply intended to

convey the desire that those who would not come to the light should be brought to it; but it was strangely answered. The poor labouring man thought the prayer was intended for himself, and he began to weep and pray. He is now a child of God, and, having found the "Light of the World," in his own humble way he endeavours to bring others under the genial influence of the gospel.

CHAPTER VI.

YOUNG MEN AND EVANGELISTIC WORK IN LONDON.

*The rash heroism of youth.—The pastor's College and London Churches.
—Mission work in St. Giles'.*

MANHOOD has been recognised as the isthmus between the two extremes of rashness and timidity. Youth forms the occasion of many a solemn shake of the head: old age is the butt for the bitterest sarcasms of youth. Inexperience is the verdict of the aged on the daring movements of youth; caution, or "old-fogginess," is the deliverance of youth on the prudence of age. Prudence, we young men think, walks in silver slippers, and fears to tread pebbly roads. Heroism walks trippingly over dangerous ruts, because its shoes are of iron and brass. Prudence has the sugar-plums, compliments, card baskets, ice-creams, tissue-like refinements, and lackadaisical joys of life. Heroism—being the condition of conflict of the soul with some base thing—has to wear heavy buckram, cumbersome armour, and bear severe discipline. Prudence, at the instigation of sloth, has smothered many virtues at the birth. Rashness, so termed, has nipped many voices in the bud. Timidity has turned the scale in favour of weakness and insipidity. Courage has bearded the lion in his den, and shouted the pean of victory; has taken up the jawbone of an ass and has slain thousands, while Hesitation has admired the ass and become assimilated unto it. For fear of innovation, men have slunk into disservice and obscurity; for fearlessness of warring against the fashion of things that passeth away, men have worked contradictions by displanting the old and re-planting still older things on their site.

To my mind this development of youthful rashness, which is not always, however, the result of a zeal proportionate to knowledge,

when condemned by old sages who mourn over the decadence of the times, and long for the return of gilt coat-buttons, knee-breeches, swallow-tails, and pigtails, that characterised their most venerable, grave, and learned grandfathers, has in it a wealth of noble purpose not to be ascertained by petty calculations. Mediocrity, I know, may be gifted with complacent pride; and that pride may soon produce, if unchecked, a kind of mental hydrophobia which earthly skill will never cure. But genius must possess a healthy measure of self-trust; and inexperienced hardihood and overwhelming ambition, not selfish, in a good cause, may not settle down before a dish of philosophical distinctions, but may prefer its meal of herbs with all their bitterness. After all, heroism, as some American author has observed in some essay only exceeded in dulness by the paper, you, my good-tempered reader, are trying to wade through, is an obedience to the secret powerful impulses of a man's character.

It was stated at the opening of the Grove Road Chapel by the London Baptist Association in June, that were *sixty* now commodious chapels erected in the east of London, they would not be too many for the thousands who cannot, if they would, attend public worship. Considering the awful spiritual destitution of this great metropolis, we should thank God for any agency that may be put forward for the promulgation of the gospel. If prudence does not approve of every method of Christian service, necessity will do so. Respectability shirks what faith and works perform. Lodging-house preaching, open-air effort, and teaching in taverns and casinos may appear strange to the world, which despises "the foolishness of preaching;" but God has impressed his gracious blessing upon these rash enterprises. We live in an age when the god of this world is, by every means, endeavouring to extend his kingdom. Christian men must everywhere meet the great grim foe on his own grounds, and there prepare for a vigorous encounter. All mutterings respecting the injudiciousness of men who evangelise among the masses is beside the mark: if it be not cowardly, it is unchristian. Wherever Christ crucified is preached, faithfully and acceptably, we rejoice, and will continue to do so, by whomsoever preached, in whatever way. The young men have before them noble opportunities of doing much to improve the religious condition of the people. Let the laymen come

forth, not apeing priestly functions, nor fearing sacramentarian frowns, but boldly, in the name of God, determined to preach the Saviour of sinners to dying men.

The laymen, we say. As an instance of what they may do, by God's grace, we propose briefly sketching the work of a young evangelist in St. Giles'. One Sunday evening, in traversing through St. Giles', we lighted upon a mission hall in King-steet. This street was at the time overflowing with children, large numbers of whom were playing at various youths' games. The street is inhabited by poor people—labourers, shoemakers, costermongers, and artisans generally. In a contiguous street, there are not less than one thousand residents, who occupy not more than one room each family. It is in this neighbourhood that Mr. McCree labours, and no district in London is better cared for than St. Giles', by him and his numerous able associates. The room, which will hold three hundred, is badly situated, and we found it well filled. It is shockingly ventilated—there is no through current, and the heat during the summer is as oppressive as the chilliness is disagreeable in the winter. Overhead there is a schoolroom, which, we were told, will accommodate one hundred and fifty children. The roof is dilapidated, and in wet weather the rain oozes through it. The hall is held on a monthly tenancy, and the working expenses (£120 per annum) are now entirely met by the weekly contributions of the regular worshippers. An effort is being made to build a new hall to hold more than twice the number of persons who now fill the present building; and an appeal has been made to the Christian public, which, it is hoped, will meet with the required response. The congregation is composed of working people and the poorest inhabitants of the district, many of whom were miserably clad. Mr. G. Hatton is the voluntary evangelist. Engaged in business during the week, he somehow finds time to preach indoors and outdoors, to visit the sick, preside at meetings, superintend various organisations, and go the whole round of a pastor's multifarious duties. Of evidently a weak frame, and indifferent health, he manifests considerable vigour of mind and force of style. Impressive, enthusiastic, exciting, he succeeds in arousing the most lethargic, and in rescuing many who were dead in sins, and destitute of all manliness of conduct. The service is conducted after the usual order, and a prayer-

meeting, at which the majority remain, is merged into the preaching service. We saw nothing sufficiently striking in the evening's devotions to note; a solemnity of feeling and earnestness of purpose prevailed, and showed the character of the work done through Mr. Hatton's instrumentality.

The origin of this mission may be briefly and profitably sketched. In January, 1860, a few young men, chiefly members of Bloomsbury Chapel, organised a little society for relieving the poor of St. Giles', each member contributing the small sum of fourpence a-week. There was nothing remarkable in this effort: hundreds of Christian young men have done as well, perhaps better; but the spirit in which the work was done was of far more consequence. The visitation of the sick and distressed was a golden opportunity for a golden work. The Cross of Christ was uplifted in the meanest homes, and God's blessing was manifestly felt. The society grew and extended, and became affiliated to the Church. A small room in Queen Street, Seven Dials, which would hold seventy persons, was obtained. The difficulties at the outset were provoking. Nothing but sanctified perseverance would have contended for long against them. Once, in a prayer meeting in the vestry, while a good brother was supplicating divine favours for the poor of the district, a hand was put though the window at his back, and, grasping his whiskers, gave them certain most vigorous pulls. At another time, troops of noisy children would gallop up and down the passages, hooting with the deliberate intention of destroying the hopes of edification which the worshippers inside may have had. There was an aperture through the window-shutters, which incorrigible lads used as a mouth-piece for the conveyance of unmusical, if not execrable sounds, which vied only with those blasts of a trombone with which Londoners are favoured when their nerves are unusually sensitive through illness. A drunken woman was once sent sprawling on the floor in the middle of the room by mischievous lads outside. These, and other painfully ludicrous and disagreeable reminiscences of bygone difficulties, make one laugh now, but they were no fitting subjects for joking then. With all the discouragements that tried the evangelist's faith, God gave, we are informed, "many distinct signs of his approbation, and the church books of Bloomsbury Chapel could now testify to the fact that many who came in to scoff, went home to pray, and commence

the new life with a new heart." The remainder of the history of the effort shall be given in Mr. Hatton's own words :—

"It having become absolutely necessary to obtain a larger and more suitable place to meet in, much prayer was offered for the Lord's guidance. At this time, the Wesleyans, who had been renting a chapel in King Street, were compelled to give it up. Immediate application was made to the landlord, and, with the kind assistance of the Bloomsbury Chapel Domestic Mission Committee, we were enabled to rent it for mission work. This building will hold about three hundred persons, with a school-room above nearly as large. Since the opening, in July, 1864, the congregations have gone on steadily increasing, until now we find great difficulty in seating those who regularly attend, and have several times been compelled to close the doors, the building has been so uncomfortably packed. Some few months since, the few who have been converted to God at the hall, and have made the place their spiritual home, expressed a strong desire to support their own cause entirely. Up to this time, the rent and expenses had been paid by the Domestic Missionary Committee at Bloomsbury Chapel. Their wish was complied with, and the management of the hall is now in the hands of the Committee of what we term the St. Giles' Christian Union, and is entirely a self-supporting cause. The expenses, some £120 a-year, are met by the weekly contributions of the regular worshippers. A Baptist church has been formed, of which Mr. George Hatton was unanimously chosen the pastor. It already numbers ninety-two members, and many others are waiting."

A few cases of interesting conversions have been given me; and I select the following, again using Mr. Hatton's own words :—

"A. R.—A young man, well known in St. Giles' for his daring profligacy and sin, came into the Mission Hall with the intention of disturbing the service. He was seen at the commencement of the meeting smoking a pipe, and behaving in a most indecorous manner. He was convinced of sin that night, and found the Saviour next week, and is now one of the happiest and most consistent working Christians we have.

"R. A. and Family.—When we first discovered these people, they were dwelling in a miserable garret in St. Giles', and in a most deplorable condition. They were without food or firing, and had been so

for very many hours. The husband was a drunkard, and when intoxicated, nothing could restrain him. After attending to their temporal wants, we were enabled to persuade them to come and hear the gospel at the Mission Hall, and we have had the joy of seeing the whole family (save one very little one) brought to Jesus—father, mother, and their children. There is not now a more respectable and happy family to be found in St. Giles'.

"M. D.—A poor, wandering, homeless girl, picked up, without a friend, half-naked, hungry, ignorant, and dirty, and very, very far from God. She was induced to come into the Mission Hall, and was there truly converted to God. We were enabled entirely to support her for a few weeks, until we could obtain for her a situation. She was placed in the family of a kind, Christian lady, and has been doing admirably well for the last twelve months. Her piety is unmisgakeable, and she is now held in esteem by all who know her. She frequently sends a contribution for the funds from her salary.

"M. and S. G.—The Sunday afternoon visitors are in the habit of going from door to door, to invite by printed invitation and otherwise, to the service at the hall. Our friends referred to were both out when the visitors called, and in consequence the invitation paper was pushed under the door; on their return, the paper was, by some means, swept into the grate, and not noticed until next day, when the wife was clearing up the cinders. Her attention was attracted to the bill, and she resolved to attend the next service. On the following Sunday evening, she was at the hall, and was converted to God the same night. She then persuaded her husband to attend, and he has also found the pearl of great price. The wondrous change wrought is truly astounding to them. They are both members of the church.

"W. E. B.—This man has received a first-class education, and he has moved in a good position, but through improvidence and vice, has been reduced to the court stratum. When we found him, he was a collector of rags and bones, without a home or a friend. He has been induced to attend the mission hall, and he has now, to use his own language, been brought to the sense of the truth."

• In connection with this mission, there is lodging-house visitation, open-air preaching, temperance meetings, tract distribution, children's evening class, where some seventy poor girls learn to sew and make

their own clothes. The garments, when made, are sold at a mere trifle to the parents of the children, and thus scores of little ones are clothed in new apparel, instead of in old, worn-out dresses which are obtained from second hand shops. There is also a free library, and a savings bank, in which £150 a-year are deposited. Thus a good work is done, not only for the religious, but also for the social improvement of the destitute poor.

It is this kind of work which Christian young men may be able to perform. In nearly every large town, there are districts of a similar character requiring evangelisation. A little holy heroism may do wonders. Purposeless rashness—"cutting a dash," to use a fast expression—for the sake of novelty, is despicable. But zeal based on knowledge, heroism based on the purest religious instincts, force governed by faith, perseverance accompanied with prayer, cannot be expended in God's service without its results. A simple gospel, simply preached in all simplicity, with a simple purpose, will do for the wild wastes of spiritual deserts what has been done in our own arid hearts—fructify the soul, and cause it to blossom with virtues.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COSTERMONGERS OF LONDON

It is Sunday morning. The bells are chiming. The City is quiet even to melancholy. The haunts of the lords of business are deserted, and seem to possess a mysterious spirit of solitariness. The few straggling persons you meet with are not citizens. Most of them are countrymen, who have just arrived by railway; you know them by the dreaminess and general vagueness with which they look around them—here, there, and everywhere, but the direction in which they are journeying. To those accustomed to the City on business-days, a walk through it on a Sunday morning is as strange as visiting some foreign land, the only knowledge of which you have gathered by photographs and engravings. Here and there you discover to your surprise a post, a letter-box, a railing, an inscription, or an antiquity or architectural object, of the existence of which you were not cognizant, though you had passed the spot perhaps twice a day for years. During the week, the crowds of businessmen

who are running against each other, render it necessary for you to be careful to look straight a-head. You are all anxiety to discover some friendly gaps by which you may emerge out of a chaos of black coats, without being subjected to a blow in the stomach from the elbows of some nervous man, whose business anxiety makes him oblivious of all the comforts of his fellow men.

But the bells that are calling together the few people who attend the City churches, are telling them of the obligations of the Day of Rest. We are listlessly threading our way through certain streets leading to a scene as exciting as noise and clamour and overcrowding can make it. We are now in Whitecross-street, Barbican—a long, somewhat narrow thoroughfare, which still continues to be the street-market for the poor of the city. As you enter this street, you hear a hum of voices; and the nearer you get, the louder and more numerous the sounds grow. The shouting is not sufficiently loud to break the tympanum of one's ears, but the hum and bustle, the squeaking cries and burly sounds, mingled with the clatter of crockery, and the testing of tin-utensils, produce a music which could not be excelled, excepting perhaps in that distant age when the confusion of tongues was created. Crowds of women whose dresses hang around their persons like wet clothes on a drowned body, with no bonnets on, their hair presenting the appearance of a tangled skein of thread, which it would be simple madness to attempt to unravel, and their faces revealing the owner's decided objection to the intrusion of soap and water, are mingling with respectably attired mechanics' wives, who, with the key hanging on one finger, and a huge basket on one arm, are anxiously scanning the contents of each seller's barrow, and counting the halfpence and six-penny pieces which they have concealed in the palm of their hands. Interspersed with this motley assembly may be seen the daughters and wives of the costermongers who live in this locality, and whose vegetables find their way into all parts of London. These girls have the bloom of youth upon them, and some of them are—pardon the compliment for its truth—enchantingly beautiful, a beauty, however, that fades after a few years of out-door life. They are quiet in their behaviour, shrewd in their dealings, smart in their answers, yet respectful withal, and exceedingly friendly-disposed to all who recognize them. They are true types of the coster-girls, clean, witty, business-like,

affectionate, heroic, struggling, and smart; they do not wear bonnets, as a rule, for bonnets belong to the half-caste costers, yet circumstances sometimes demand that they should not altogether be banished into higher circles of life. The costermonger himself is scarcely visible among the mass of street dealers; and I understand he leaves business in this street to the females, while he takes his barrow into other and less supplied localities. But there is a large class of men who lead a nomad life to be found in their places. These fellows, most of whom are dirty, and consequently are an object of dislike to the coster, who believes in cleanliness and despises dirt and slatternly ways, are engaged in a variety of singular occupations. They mostly live in the alleys of the neighbourhood, and many of them make the goods they sell. By the side of a large open umbrella turned inside up, filled with pictures, painted with all the colours of the rainbow, and probably a few more, you may see a dealer in linens which he sells at twopence each. Stockings of all colours and sizes are sold side by side with oranges, sage, and toys; while interspersed are the coster-girls with vegetables, and Irish women with trays containing assorted groups of onions, carrots, turnips and parsley,—"potherbs" as they are called—which are disposed of at a penny a lot. Butchers are shouting "buy, buy, buy; what will yer buy?" while up in a side court is an old clothes mart, where buyers are trying on coats and haggling about the terms. Then we have dealers in stationery, the sheets of which have a dusky tinge, newspaper vendors, dealers in braccs, which are suspended on a line in the same way as those gold watches and chains are hung which are "given away for a penny." At a corner of one alley, we saw a large barrow containing a number of putrescible rabbits, which were marked up at 4½d. and 6d. each! Of their appearance and colour we need say nothing, but they were such as to make us heartily pity the stomachs of the poor creatures who could eat them.

Turning up one of the numerous alleys leading out of Whitecross Street, we pierce our way through a miserable cobweb of courts and avenues that are connected with the main thoroughfares known as Old Street, Goswell Street, Barbican, &c. Most of the houses in this warren are of the old "ramshackls" type so common to localities where the poorest of the poor reside. Some bear a decent appearance, and these are the homes of the costermonger; but a large

proportion are so thickly built, and are so desolate-looking, that they strike you at once as the resort of thieves, vagabonds, and social outcasts. And so I find them to be. In one or two courts the houses were built so closely together that the inhabitants of one side might shake hands with those living on the opposite side. The costermongers select those courts where there is a small space for their barrows, and there are a number of squares, paved with the roughest pebbles which were filled with barrows and covered with vegetable refuse. In a small area there are about 10,000 adults and 4,500 children living in houses in which a family occupies every room. A City Missionary has found that six houses contained *thirty-six* families, and Playhouse-yard contained 180 families, out of which not more than forty people attend the means of grace. "I have called," says this missionary, "upon 150 families before I have found a member of a Christian church." A more neglected district could not be found in London; and were it not for the earnest work of some godly and devoted men, the spiritual condition of this closely-packed and poverty-stricken neighbourhood would be as sad and wretched as in the most degraded heathen lands.

One of the useful evangelists who has helped to bear away this reproach is Mr. W. J. Orsman, a young man who, after the hours of business, devotes his talents and time to voluntary evangelism. Mr. Orsman is an active member of Mr. Spurgeon's church. He has also for some years past been honorary secretary to the Evangelists' Association of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. He has had no connection with the Pastor's College, and is to all intents and purposes an evangelist, not a pastor. Yet he has a church, does pastoral work, and has much more of a pastor's cares than some would probably like to bear. Our conviction is, that religious men may be as interested and as stimulated to honest work as the author has been by learning what a simple-hearted, earnest brother can do for God, by devotedly laying out his abilities for the spiritual and social benefit of what are considered to be "the unreachable masses." Our story therefore will bear that moral.

Golden Lane runs out of Whitecross Street. It is a long, narrow lane of old, squalid houses and shops, closed burying-grounds, with one or two newly-built dwellings; and judging from the habits and attire of the inhabitants of this misnamed street, we should no

readily conclude that the colour of *gold* was known to them. In one cellar-sort of shop where there were coals of all shapes and kinds—from a heap of gunpowder dust of strange black-grey-whitey hue to a more reasonable burning size—I saw a "grimy" old woman, whose appearance approached the typical witches of Macbeth. With arms a-kimbo she was endeavouring to look pleasantly-fierce at us in return for our friendly glances; but the latter half of that descriptive compound word more accurately explains the result than any other I could choose. Most of the other shops are of the same begrimed character; they are devoted to the sale of almost every conceivable object, and the windows are well stored with a variety of articles about as miscellaneous in character as those found in Aunt Chloe's pockets.

In Golden Lane, a Swiss gentleman, a merchant in Wood Street, Mr. Augustus Viewig, and member of Mr. Spurgeon's church, has, with a liberality and spirit of enterprise worthy of the highest commendation, erected improved dwellings, baths and laundries for the labouring classes. In the rear of this building is another block, devoted to the same purposes, but possessing in addition a comfortable chapel. This hall is let at a nominal rental to Mr. Orsman, and is used for public services, as a free ragged school, and for other religious and benevolent purposes. A more comfortable room for special services to the poor can scarcely be found. It will hold between 400 and 500 persons; it has a commodious platform, a gallery all round, and at the end and under the gallery is the school-room, which is far too small for the children who listen on Sundays and week-days to the instruction given them. Two day school teachers are supported, and Mr. Orsman is also responsible for the payment of gas and other incidental expenses. A committee of gentlemen occasionally assist him by their advice, and very warm sympathy is manifested toward the work by Mr. Viewig*. The building was erected in 1864, but the mission was commenced in 1862, when Mr. Viewig invited Mr. Orsman to conduct some services in a room on the ground floor of a model lodging house he had built in Bell Alley, Goswell Street. For two years Mr. Orsman conducted services in the open air and in the little room, visited the families in the adja-

*The buildings erected by Mr. Viewig have passed into the hands of a company in which Mr. V. holds £15,000 worth of shares, and takes a part in the directorship.

cent courts, and for a long time was sole teacher in the Sunday-school he established. The work was, perhaps, sufficiently discouraging at first to drive away a man of less faith in God and devotedness and perseverance, but Mr. Orsman was not the man to give up a good work. He was soon blessed with conversions; two Moravian ladies proffered their assistance, and the services and schools were well attended. The court was at that time in a worse condition than it is now, and delicacy would revolt at any truthful description of the sins and practices of the place. Thieves, prostitutes, blackguards of every degree of wickedness, tramps and vagrants found this court a suitable rendezvous. Piles of vegetables invariably lay in various parts of the roadway waiting their turn to be trimmed, and everywhere fast decaying refuse vegetable matter was to be seen filling the air with ill odours and disease. Very little attention was paid to the "*teachers*," as they were called, at first; and, indeed, they were looked upon as curiosities of civilization, who required the infliction of a few practical jokes to bring them to understand the conventionalities of ordinary life. The door of the room was sometimes burst upon, and a gang of lads would come tumbling in one over the other, creating dismay and confusion amongst those assembled inside; at other times a few crackers were considered to be best fitted to keep the congregations awake, and failing that, a sort of house music was produced from old tin kettles, and other worn-out articles of domestic ironmongery. With all these and other impediments the good work went on, and the "*teachers*" could hardly be treated with greater respect than they are now.

The mission has since been the means of doing much good in the neighbourhood, and the conversions have been sufficiently numerous to be a great encouragement to perseverance. The congregation is constantly changing, owing partly to the precarious nature of their employment, partly to the fact that whenever they can, converted men quit their old haunts and live in more decent dwellings, and partly in consequence of their joining other churches. Many are rejoicing in hope of heaven who have found the Saviour in the Evangelist's Tabernacle, and Mr. Orsman assures me that a heartier or more loving congregation cannot be found anywhere. One of the deacons was a costermonger at the time of his conversion; the

bell-ringer is a coster, and I am informed that among Mr. O.'s ablest assistants at the special meetings is one who was a costermonger, but who has recently "gone into the fried fish line." About forty meet around the Lord's table on the first Sunday evening in the month, and it would seem that so rigid is the abstinence of some, who doubtless have suffered much before conversion from over-indulgence, that to meet their scruples, unfermented wine is used.

On the Sabbath morning, prior to the service in the Tabernacle, a number of earnest helpers hold an open air service in the centre of Whitecross Street, and not withstanding the hubbub around them, they manage to secure a respectable audience. Then the brethren file off to the Tabernacle and hold a prayer-meeting; after which the morning service commences. The audience in the morning is far from being a large one; perhaps 150 persons attend. The men are either at home or with their wives shopping, and the costers—those of course who are mere hearers and not doers of the word—are out selling their goods.* In the afternoon there is a Bible-class, while one of the deacons conducts the Sunday-school, in which there are fourteen teachers, who, with one exception, have sprung out of the congregation. The evening meeting is the most interesting one. A large bell on the top of the buildings brings together those who, but for the bell, would not know the time of the day or of the service. The service is preceded by a short prayer-meeting held by a number of persons who spend the evening in visiting the tramps and thieves in the lodging-houses, to whom they preach the Word of Life. These men are members of the church, and although scarcely able to read, they yet manage to gain the attention of the vilest scum of the district. One of these visitors fluently converses on religious topics and speaks with considerable skill to the vulgarest outcasts, and yet he is unable to read his Bible, and has to depend on his tolerably good memory for all the aids so necessary in evangelistic work. The thieves abounding in this neighbourhood, infesting the public-houses, sleeping in the commonest of lodging-

* It is a great difficulty in all similar neighbourhoods to get a good congregation in the morning. There is a mission hall within a stone's throw from Mr. Orsman's chapel, conducted by some of Mr. Samuel Morley's *employees*, and the attendance there is far from being as good as in the evening.

houses, or in the maze of courts in which the mission hall is situated, where they are comparatively free from the unpleasant visits of the police, have attentively listened to the band of workers, and God has been pleased to manifest his approbation of the efforts put forth by this unpolished machinery.

By seven o'clock the chapel becomes filled with a motley congregation. Numbers are of the poorest class, and some of the women, with their haggard, deep-furrowed countenances, careless, shabby attire, and poverty-stricken appearance, show too plainly the destitution to which they have been brought. On the whole, however, there is a look of tidiness and respectability which could hardly have been expected from people living in so degraded a district. Prior to giving out the opening hymn the well-known "Sanctus" is spontaneously sung to the lead of the harmonium—an instrument which is well appreciated by the people—and the rendering was both solemn and effective. The singing throughout was good; the female voices strong, but not unmusical. The men's—well, they always do their best, and if they are sometimes noisy, their earnestness covers the fault arising solely from a want of musical taste.

Mr. Orsman's addresses are simple, earnest, manly, and straightforward. He eschews all clap-trap, and carefully avoids all oratorical vapouring and sawing the air with his arms, believing, as he does, that the real devils he has to fight against are lodged in more dangerous and secret places than in the atmosphere which his congregation breathes. He keeps to his subject, remembers his aim in all he says, and brings into service the stray thoughts gathered amid the associations of the previous week. Poetical fancies he does not seem to indulge in, and evidently he prefers the magnificent beauty which gilds the promises of the gospel to the bright coruscations of the sublimest poet. To his mind, everything connected with his work assumes a practical shape. Sin with him is a tangible evil; hell is a reality; eternal death is no fancy. Repentance to be true must lead to practical fruits; conversion and holiness are matters of everyday experience. Hence Mr. Orsman's people do not understand a Sunday religion which has no week-day obligations; and with them it is as much a duty to attend the house of God in the prayer-meeting as on preaching occasions. And

Mr Orsman himself works on this principle,* for his activity is unceasing. Schools to look after, both ragged and Sunday, Bible classes, savings banks, temperance societies, sick-fund, lodging-house visitation, preaching, &c., &c.; all this entails an amount of work upon a young man, who has also to earn his living, that could not be done unless God were truly with him. The poor people appreciate his labours, and indeed are so thoroughly accustomed to a preacher who is far superior mentally to themselves, that they manifest decided opposition to uneducated jargon and vapid talk. They want simple practical preaching, without the flowers of rhetoric, or the top-lofty flights of a giddy imagination, and in their pastor they have all they require.

After the service a prayer-meeting is held, and generally there are over 100 persons present. This meeting will extend frequently to two hours; for the poor have wretched homes to go to, and prefer the solemn hour of prayer, where they obtain comfort in their distress, and joy in their God, to gossiping away the remainder of the evening. Not that they are not gossips;—who ever heard of a woman that was worth much who did not “gossip a bit?”—but their conversation is often a worthy type of what godly women should aim at.

But to the costermongers again. You may see them by the score in groups, varying in numbers all the Sunday afternoon, playing at “pitch and toss,” or at other games, in which money may be won or lost. The rest of the day is spent at the public house; so that the habits of this class of men are such as to render it difficult to attract them to a place of worship. Yet there is a sort of feeling among them, that religion *may* be a good thing; but then they tell you, “It’s nothing in my line, sir.” “It don’t do for the likes of us poor people.” “We ain’t got no time to think on them things.” “Wot’s the use on it all to us?” and so on. The coster is of a practical mind, and he resolves everything into business. “What do the costers think

* At the risk of being stigmatized as a revealer of secrets, I venture to state here that about twelve months ago Mr. O. had £40 in the bank, and thinking it was lying idle, he bought a printing press and stock of types with it. He now prints his own bills, circulars, cards of invitation, &c., and is actually getting up a Hymn-book to consist of 500 hymns, which he purposes selling to his people at One Penny. So that a large sum is thus saved yearly by this devoted act. I have seen this printing stock. I may be gushing, but I think such practical devotedness as this deserves a much higher eulogium than I can dare to give.

of a future world?" I asked of a converted coster. "Why, sir," he sadly answered, "nothing, only that they will be turned into cabbage-heads." "Will it pay?" is a frequent answer, and whilst they weigh the profitableness of godliness by £ s. d., they are content to remain in darkness. You cannot tell them religion will bring them even the same income as irreligion does, because costers make a good profit—often the best during the week—of their Sunday trade; and they must give up cheating, in which they are as a class so notoriously clever. A costermonger, when he turns to God, has frequently to give up his daily calling, and several that I have met with have become bricklayers, labourers, earning miserable pittances rather than obtain great profits by inconsistency. "He is a manly fellow, and knows that to be religious he must be consistent in his daily life. I do not know of any class of roughs who would be nobler soldiers of the Cross than these men.

The coster is in his way a happy man; with his pipe in his mouth, his dog at his side—very affectionate is he to his dog—and a spirit of independence within him, he can defy every one to render him ill-tempered *but the policeman*. To the coster the police are worse than a nuisance; they are the cause of his being rude, and saucy, and ill-tempered, and there are but few sins to which the coster is addicted but what he believes he is "egged on" to by the "bobby." And sometimes, I am told, the police do treat the poor fellows shamefully; and as they are obliged to submit, or have their street business privileges greatly curtailed, the coster satisfies his boiling rage by hissing out words that are too sulphureous to mention. Three times in his life the coster attends a place of worship: 1st. To be christened—a solemn obligation with some of them, to which they attach the greatest importance; for unless they have been christened, Mr. Puseyite declines to interest himself in their behalf when ill, or "cracked-up." 2nd. To be married—i. e. with those who are married, for the majority do not enter into any such legal contract. 3rd. To accompany his wife at churching—a religious duty with some who believe that an entrance into church three times during their lives will guarantee their entrance into heaven—if there be such a place. The coster knows what it is to quarrel with the "missus," and alack! he is not sufficiently manly to understand how discreditable it is to colour his wife's eyes. Mr. Orsman has frequently to

become the arbiter in family disputes among them ; but how he manages to interpose without receiving a discoloured nose is beyond the comprehension of the writer. His advice is sometimes sought as to business-matters, and he has been able to aid some in getting legally married who had been living as man and wife perhaps for years.

Most of the costermongers of Golden Lane buy up the refuse of the London markets at a low figure, and retail them in the streets. Vegetables are mostly sold by them, but their last resort is to sell fish, crockery, and chumps of wood. The coster is a man of monarchical principles, and believes in might as well as right. There is a Prince of the costers, who sometimes attends the Mission Hall, and he is generally called "Crockery Jack." He is a ringleader in wickedness, and a thorough drunkard. He and his young wife were fond of drink ; and both might have been seen, drunk in the streets, the man alternately beating his wife and selling his wares. Drink brought this woman, who was naturally consumptive, to the grave, but death did not take its captive before she found a Saviour. At first, Mr. Orsman tells me, she was callous and indifferent to earnest entreaty, but on one occasion, after prayer had been offered, the poor creature burst into tears, and begged Mr. O. to remain with her until she died. Her husband was by the bedside drunk, and sobbing like a child. Special prayer was offered up at the Mission Hall, and in the evening of this Sabbath some sign of spiritual perception appeared. Her husband was still drunk. On Monday, sundry little much-needed comforts were supplied, and subsequent visits confirmed the belief that the Lord of all hearts had taken possession of this one. On Wednesday she died. For a time, the husband seemed subdued in spirits, but he ultimately returned to his old vices. Yet he manifests his gratitude to the preacher and attends the congregation, and the heart's desire of many is that he may be saved.

A very curious group of helpers are associated with Mr. Orsman. There are two converted thieves—men not of forbidding, but of genial aspect—a cheap Jack, who can relate an experience of some yards' length of printed matter, a play-actor, an intelligent newsboy, and some sweeps, or as they style themselves, "chummies." These gentlemen are of considerable service in the open air, where their voices are heard to better advantage than within doors. Whenever

they address an indoor meeting they are greeted by their former companions with rounds of applause, and in the streets they are recognised and saluted in a most friendly and jovial manner. These men are possessed of strong common sense, and some of their speeches sparkle with golden thoughts. One of the converted sweeps is a very hearty worker; and he seldom sweeps a chimney without talking to the servant girls about the love of Jesus. It need hardly be said that he introduces his topic in a variety of strategic ways. On one occasion he asked why the Lord didn't give him more money if he loved him so well as he represented; and his reply was ready in a moment—"Cos the Lord knows I couldn't keep it if I had more; so he only gives me as much as I can usefully spend." Really that would be a capital state of mind for some money-grubbing Christians, who think more of getting wealth than of serving their Master. The sweep's history is exceedingly interesting, although it is impossible to relate it in his own free racy language. He tells us, "I'm no preacher; I've not bin to college; but I've bin to the Lord Jesus, and he's saved my soul. I'm out of hell, and in the way to heaven." This he says in a quiet, earnest way, with a smile on his half-grimy face; and so far from indulging in oratorical effect, he invariably keeps his hands in his coat pockets. He gravely adds—"When a boy, I had to climb chimneys; I stuck up once, and if my father hadn't pulled me out alive, I should have gone to hell. Another time he was nearly "drowned." The speaker has evidently a profound contempt for the devil, whom he stigmatises as a "great coward." Yet he fears his Satanic Majesty greatly, for he tells you, "he has such crafty ways." When he was twelve years old he was imprisoned in the House of Correction for stealing some wood, but judging from his story, he was more sinned against than sinning. When he got out of gaol the devil tried to tempt him to sin again. "Oh, yes! my friends, the devil is allays ready to shove you down in the mud when he thinks you is weak. The devil is the biggest coward in the world." But though he was weak in himself, his Father had "promised to take him in hand." "The devil is fond of trying to kidnap the Lord's children on the sly but Jesus is a match for him." The good fellow is quite at home in depicting the glories of heaven, and his analogies are of a somewhat sooty character. "I sweeps chimneys now; but in heaven

there is no chimneys ; I shan't have these black clothes—no, I shall have a white surplice.” The idea of a black sweep wearing a white surplice provokes a broad grin ; but we know that the blackest sinners will be clothed in white before the throne of God and the Lamb. He tries to simplify the gospel in an ingenious way. Once he wanted to show that Jesus Christ was the only way—that he was the door to salvation, and he spontaneously illustrated it by saying, “ Now, friends, when you come in this chapel, you had to come in by the door.” His sentences are short, and generally he is curiously discursive. “ Now, mates, you want to go to heaven ; I'll tell you how to get there : trust in Jesus Christ ; he'll never forsake you. He ain't like earthly friends when you get down in the valley. I, a poor chummy, am glad to wash my face when my day's work is done, but how much better to have Christ to wash your black soul !” He knows how to use keen-edged satire ; for instance, in speaking of the returning prodigal, he remarked, “ Giant Despair goes into an awful fit when Christ shines in the heart.” He is a strong believer in final perseverance, but he is equally strong in his convictions as to working out his own salvation with fear and trembling. “ ‘ How do you know you are going to heaven ? ’ sez my old chums. ‘ Well,’ sez I, how do you know whether you've got sugar in your tea ? ’ ”—an invincible argument to all who possess the faculty of tasting.

In the *Freeman*, of January 11, there appeared the story of a converted thief, who confesses he has been in every prison in London. He was converted by means of a lad, who was addressing a congregation five years ago in Victoria Theatre.

A converted wood-chopper divides his time between Mr. Orsman and Mr. Sawday, of Pentonville. He speaks in a disconnected manner, but his entangled sentences are worthy of being unravelled. “ Perhaps you're thinking we're paid for preaching ; so we are, but not in the wages of sin—no, it is eternal life we get, the gift of God. We don't boast of our badness because it is pleasant, but because it honours Christ. If you doubt the power of God see it in me ; it has made me a good father, a loving husband, and a praying man ! The grace of God has made me open my room for a prayer-meeting and myself a preacher.” A converted costermonger, of Whitecross Street, has about the same tale to tell. Prior to his conversion he was in the habit of spending his Sundays in bird-catching in Hornsey ; now

he preaches in the streets. One Sunday he was standing in Club Row, when an open-air preacher offered him a tract: "No use to me, guv'nor." "Why?" "'Cos I can't read"—a very reasonable answer. But the preacher told him of the Saviour of sinners, and he felt the operation of the Holy Spirit upon his heart. He went home and determined to go to chapel in the evening. His wife, who is an ungodly woman, and still leads him a sad life, manifested strong jealous feelings when she saw him dress so scrupulously, and she accompanied him to chapel. He found rest in Christ that night.

A converted thief, who has applied to Mr. Orsman for membership, and whose wife has recently shown signs of a changed life, thus relates his strange experience: "I'm werry glad to be here and sing with you. I was one of the worst of thieves thirteen years ago; I added to my other sins by robbing my own father. I was werry fond o' tossing at the water side, and to get money I nibbled some coal off the barges, but, like the mouses, I nibbled once too often, and was caught. Had thirteen weeks in prison for that. When I came out my old mates were arter me, for they know'd I'd saved some tin. I got in again and again, for I kept close to the devil's heels. At last I heard an open-air preacher on Clerkenwell-green. I was tossing, as usual, but the Lord saved my soul, and now I work for Christ when my day's portering is over. I'm so happy, I'm always singing day and night, and even in my sleep. Now I preaches in the same street I lives in, and I want all my friends to be saved."

There is one curious custom largely prevailing among costermongers which is not generally known. On Sunday they are in the habit of singing one finch against another for money. A certain singular note comes out in a certain number of vibrations, and the finch that gives the most of these notes within a fixed number of minutes is the victor. Costermongers are exquisite bird-fanciers, and they tramp to a forest and frequently catch thirty birds each on a Sabbath morning.

The Sunday-school work is in a prosperous condition, but it is impossible to accommodate more than the 150 children who attend; if Mr. Orsman had a building which would accommodate a thousand more, he is convinced the scholars would come. It is not easy work to win the attention of such children; but the difficulty has not been so great as in many cases. The day ragged-school is

superintended by a most effective lady teacher, who supports herself in this way, and whose interest in the work is not to be measured by pecuniary considerations.

The children meet their teachers on Monday evening for industrial purposes, and it is a pleasant sight to observe them making door-mats and patchwork quilts, &c., and to hear them sing little hymns and temperance ditties. One lad was engaged in making himself a pair of trousers.

The spiritual good which Mr. Orsman's work has been the means of effecting is wonderful. Lives that were spent in unholy purposes, in lust and drunkenness, have been, by God's grace, transformed into lives of purity and Christian devotedness. In many cases the most notorious sinners prove to be the most exemplary Christians—men and women whose delight is in God, and whose hearts are in His service. Considering the singular difficulties attending Mr. Orsman's work, it is really surprising that so much good has been done. The crass ignorance is fearful to look upon; the utter want of perception of spiritual things is so great that it is a work requiring both skill and persistency to make many of these poor creatures understand the simplest of all elementary religious truths.

Cattle-drovers are especially difficult to get at, for they generally work all Sunday night and indulge in slumbers during the whole day. The sandwich men, who carry notice-boards both behind and before them, are obliged to walk in the sloppy gutters, and they are consequently frequently ill and unable to attend any place of worship. These poor fellows are ill-paid—some getting 1s. 6d. and others 2s. per day. Then the costermongers have both crotchets and a supreme contempt for religion, so they have to be caught with guile. One youthful coster of some intelligence refused to attend the Mission Hall till he could understand how there were "Three Gods and yet only one. It wasn't business-like," argued the youthful fellow, for he doubtless chuckled at the thought that when he had three sovereigns they were reckoned to be of more value than one. One of his companions argued with him for one hour, but without enlightening his mind. Mr. Orsman tried to prove the doctrine of the Trinity from Scripture, but that wasn't "business-like." He therefore selected several objects from nature by way of illustration, and only succeeded when he took a lighted candle and

showed him that though the candle had grease, a wick, and a light, yet it was but one candle.

Some of the cases I have listened to are exceedingly curious. A woman, whose husband had been recently converted, went to Mr. Orsman and stated that her partner had positively declared he had found peace with God, and was certain of heaven. She said she had been a member of a church for fourteen years, and she could not say that, and nobody ought to say it, for it was awfully "resumptuous." This poor woman was subsequently convinced that she had only been a formal professor, and it pleased the Lord to change her heart.

One case highly amused us. A widow professed to constantly attend ALL the places of worship in the locality, and whenever there was a chance of obtaining a combination of spiritual with temporal food, she certainly presented herself as a candidate for both. In due time she was married to a costermonger, and she became most anxious that he should reap the temporal benefits which she had so long enjoyed in consequence of her religious behaviour. As a means to this end she introduced her husband to Mr. Orsman, so that he might be lectured, for "he's such a bad fellow." Jack immediately repudiated the base "insinuation" by replying, "No, I aint." Mr. Orsman enquired whether Jack believed he was a sinner at all, and he replied by asking, "How do yer make that out, guv'nor? I doesn't swear much nor get drunk—leastways not much—and as for beating the missus, I've only given her one black eye, and then she aggrawated me to it." The *bride* finding that matters were going contrary, whispered to her husband, accompanying her advice with sundry suggestive nudges, "why don't yer tell the good genelman you're a sinner, eh, Jack?" Mr. Orsman tried to explain to the poor fellow what it was to be a sinner, but Jack wouldn't see it at all. "Excuse me, guv'nor," said he, "but I'll tell you why I aint religious: 'cos I'm a coster, and 'ave to work on Sunday. Next, 'cos, if I wasn't to humour the old gals who buys, and tell a lot of lies to them, I shouldn't bring home a empty barra. And then what's the use of it? Why, what would a coster do without his 'baccy and drink, penny-gaff, and Sunday trade? Why, Sir, it can't be done. Look at my missus, she aint no better nor I, though she goes round to all the preaching places." At this the wife, who had grown ill-tempered, interfered, and all further conversation was

stopped by her constant iteration of "Yer know you're a sinner, Jack; why don't yer tell the genelman so?"

Converted costermongers are invariably most earnest in doing good. A poor woman told me, with tears in her eyes, how nobly she had been helped when in distress by Mr. Orsman's coster deacon; and there are many such cases which are never known to any but the parties themselves. They are equally in earnest in bringing souls to the Saviour. Sometimes they will give away tracts while selling their vegetables. One costermonger is in the habit occasionally of inserting small tracts in his cabbages; and on one occasion a woman was converted by this means, and she always thanks God that ever she bought greens of this good man. A wood-chopper follows the same plan. One day a little girl ran up to him, and said, "Please, sir, will you let father have a bundle of wood with a tract in it?" "What do you want the tract for?" asked the wood-chopper. "'Cos," answered the girl, "the one you put in afore has made father such a happy man, and he doesn't get drunk nor beat mother now, and please father thinks another tract will do mother good too."

Mr. Orsman has in his congregation two old ladies—crossing-sweepers in Old-street—a poor idiotic man who attends regularly, and a number of homeless people. The other Sunday, at the enquirers' meeting, eight females engaged in prayer, three of them costerwomen who had lately been converted—one of whom works for her husband "'cos he's lost his voice." Many of these poor women are sadly persecuted in consequence of their wives to refuse to indulge in their old vicious courses. Most of them manifest the greatest possible interest in everything connected with the mission, and are so attached to the chapel that no service is too long for them; indeed many linger singing till the last gas-burner is about to be extinguished.

The following letter from a country town was received a short time ago by Mr. Orsman: it is from a mechanic who enclosed one shilling in postage stamps:—

"Dear Sir,—Pleas accept the in Closed for your nobel institution from one that as walked the strets and aleys in golden lane beare foot and homeless i was born on the spot and livid a few years my pearrants lay their i have bean away 30 years but have not forgot the place. Pleas acknolig by return i am yours," &c.

Although many of the people attending the Evangelists' Tabernacle have been rescued from the lowest depths of vice, yet the work of grace has in most cases been singularly gentle. There have been few so-called thrilling conversions. There has been a lapse of time between conviction and conversion; between the two great stages of Christian experience, the soul-agony of despair and destruction and the tender rejoicing dawn of peace and unruffled calm. One man had a companion in the brewery close by the building, who was suddenly killed through the escape of carbonic acid gas. He assisted in taking his companion home, but the sight of the dead man's white face and the touch of his cold hand ever haunted him. He became dejected in spirit; his rest at night was disturbed; he felt he was unprepared to meet death; he remembered Mr. Orsman's address on the previous Sabbath, and his agony of mind increased until it became unendurable. He made resolutions, but they were of no use in quieting his conscience until he cast himself into Christ's dear arms, and found the peace that cannot be measured by the grandest earthly bliss.

A very remarkable instance I will give as an illustration, which Sunday-school teachers may use to advantage. A little child lay dead in a certain room; the disease being the measles. The elder child was sent away for a few days to a friend's house, but hearing her little sister was dead she secretly made her way to her mother's home. The door was open and she went in. The mother was engaged in the next house; but when she returned the little one had removed the coffin-lid, and was kneeling and praying by the side of the dead body. The mother listened to the child's prayer, which was something like this: "Gentle Jesus, come and take little Annie up to heaven to live always with thee and sister Sally. Blessed Saviour, teacher says I am one of thy lambs, so I want to leave this wicked world. Come and take mother too, make her fit to die. Amen." The tears trickled down the mother's cheeks as the child turning round said to her, "Tell the man to bring me a larger coffin, and tell teacher next Sunday that I'm gone to heaven along with Sally." The child would not leave the room, but sat hourly waiting for her coffin to come. At last she was removed by force. In the night she was taken ill, and the next day she became worse, and on the following day died, singing—

"I love Jesus, Hallelujah:

Jesus smiles and loves me too."

From the day of the child's death the mother became an altered woman ; she gave up drinking and swearing, and now she is not only rejoicing in the Saviour, but has been the instrument of leading several costermongers' wives to the Cross of Christ.

It will be seen from our narrative, that the mission is in a most prosperous condition spiritually. I can myself testify to the good done, having carefully watched the work at various times. It has been found desirable to visit each house in the district in order to show the poor the necessity and profitableness of a religious life. Prayer and faith are already exercised. A stimulus has only recently been given to the work which cannot but result in great good. Already larger numbers attend the Sabbath services than heretofore ; and a deep feeling seems to possess some who have been drunken with iniquity. Mr. Orsman deserves our prayers and our support ; he has generously, nobly worked—worked not as a blind fanatic—there is little of fanaticism in him ; but with a steady determination, a fixed purpose, a noble resolve, a single eye ; and God has blessed him, and will yet further bless him. Whatever will be the future history of this mission, God alone knows : but *I part with it under this solemn conviction, that it will grow and expand until Golden Lane will be filled with Golden sheaves for God.* Good Master ! make it so, since it is thy own delightful work !

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GIPSIES OF LONDON.

"OUTSIDE the pale of Christianity," is a phrase in common use among those who believe that certain classes of people are irreclaimably bad. Many good Christians who accept in theory the truth that no man, however degraded, is out of the reformatory power of the gospel, are somewhat loath to carry their belief to a practical conclusion. There is a mental morbidity which, while seeing sin abounding and spreading its influence through every vein of mortal life, narrows its vision of the great ocean of grace, until it appears the meanest of streams ; such persons will incredulously smile at the least intimation of the existence of godliness among the lowest of the

socially low. Godly costermongers!—Christian gipsies!—seem to be absolute contradictions—affirmative negations. Possibly, those few who lovingly cherish the dogma of reprobation as a satisfactory settlement of every evil, will judge us fanatical for indulging in the hope of the conversion to God of a race so morally and religiously abandoned as the gipsies.

Gipsies in London! Are there any? a reader may enquire. We seldom, perhaps never, discern them in, at least, the heart of the metropolis, or, if we do, it is under different circumstances to those which obtain in the provinces. This is true. The gipsy in London is vastly different to the gipsy in the country. He is far more civilised and is less conspicuous outwardly when sojourning in more enduring habitations than wicker-framed tents. His habits are less free, his freedom is more restrained; his restraints more marked in the city than in the roadside, or forest and field. In the former condition he is more difficult to influence than when roaming about. On the Sabbath he disturbs the quiet of his neighbours by fiddling, dancing, and gambling; and these highly intellectual pursuits he infinitely prefers to the more sober attractions of a preaching-house. In the winter, a number of gipsies live in some of the courts and alleys of Golden Lane, and Old Kent Road, and in Shoreditch, where they make cane chairs, and other similar articles. But, as may be supposed, there are larger numbers dwelling in the suburban fringe of the metropolis than in the city itself. Indeed, it is estimated that there are at least 400 gipsy families living in the suburbs.

The reader may skip this paragraph if he chooses, although the writer must not so treat his subject as to denude it of its historical aspect. Who are the gipsies? Where did they come from? It is said that the word gipsy—you can spell it with a *y* or an *i*, with far more reason than Mr. Weller could find for his *nonchalance* about the importance of *v* or *w*—is a corruption of *E-gypti-an*, which is exceedingly probable. Not quite so probable is the conjecture that they came from Egypt. They may have been fugitives from Hindustan to Europe; but whether they with wandering steps and slow, from Egypt or the Promised Land, took their solitary way, is not quite clear to the writer, or anybody else. Two facts of importance are indubitable. 1. Nearly all their Christian names are of Hebrew origin—Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, with names of patriarchal or

prophetical fragrance, are common among them. 2. Their language is called "Romany," and is almost entirely of Hindustanee origin;* and gipsies, naturally a suspicious people, have great confidence in he who endeavours to understand their language. A friend, who knows English gipsies well, believes that they were among the Egyptians denominated "a mixed multitude," who left the land of tyranny for the Land of Promise (Exod. xii. 38). Supposing that to have been the case, we must construct some theory to account for their disseverance from the Israelites, and determination not to return to their own country. Whether they felt the indescribable horror with which Scotchmen resident in England are credited when in prospect of returning to the "Land o' cakes," or were disturbed by the emotions which led Piabie to desist from his troublesome journey, cannot be ascertained; but according to my friend's theory, they were probably dissatisfied with the circumstances incident to the travellers in the wilderness, and so left them, and probably wandered in distant lands, until they found an entrance into India, from whence they distributed themselves over the globe. I leave this theory with the ingenious, only remarking that were one-half the conjectures of those modern prophets who most resemble the Norwood gipsies, as plausible or as symmetrical, we might hold out the hope of being converted to their views.

Mr. Crabb, a minister in Southampton, was, we believe, about the first person to exert himself on behalf of the gipsies. In 1827, he began to devise a plan which might, under the blessing of his Master, benefit the souls of these outcasts. He visited their encampments in Shirley Common, near Southampton, and although he did much good, he could not raise Christian enthusiasm on the subject. In 1857, the work of the "Institution for the Evangelisation of the Gipsies," was delegated to the London City Mission, and from that time to the present, a missionary has been supported whose work it is to travel in different parts of suburban London, visiting the camps of the gipsies and their wretched homes, which are always in the most crowded and hidden courts or lanes that can be found. The present

* I am indebted to the missionary, whose name I mention further on, and not to books, for this information respecting the origin of gipsies; but on referring to an article in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," on Gipsies, I find that Grellmann, who is the most learned writer on the subject, comes to the same conclusions, without much variation.

missionary is Mr. Burns, an intelligent, unassuming, thoughtful man, who has spent seven years in this work, and whose influence with the race is as great as it is encouraging. An unreserved manner begets confidence in a gipsy; and to have broken down the natural distrust which he has to civilised men is a work of no mean importance. Gipsies are necessarily driven about by the police; and as they have always been punished by the law for their trespasses and crimes, they look upon most men as their enemies. Hence, the missionary is at first treated with considerable suspicion, and Christianity is considered to be a part and parcel of the system of oppression from which they suffer. As they want more liberty or license than a Christian country can possibly allow, they have strong prejudices against the Gospel of Christ. Yet, any one who, with consideration, goes to them with the message of salvation, will generally be received with cordiality; and Mr. Burns assures me that an act of kindness done to a gipsy will warm his heart with lasting gratitude and affection. Until they thoroughly understand the object of the missionary, they fail to sympathise with him; when, however, his motives are comprehended, they will treat him as a friend. Mr. Burns is known among them as their *rashai*—a word which comes from a corruption of *rajah*, or chief, head, or minister.

Gipsies are remarkable for their olive complexion, jet black hair, dark, piercing eyes, and white teeth; and some of them are exceedingly handsome. Their gestures are very graceful, and they are far more polite and considerate in their manners than are some of the boors of London. To do justice to our subject, we must divide the race into three classes.

First: There are those gipsies who live in comparative affluence. They are mostly horse-dealers, who buy up broken down horses that are woefully reduced in flesh, in the North, and in Wales, and bring them to London, after they have been “polished up” and made to look smart. Such horses are sold to great advantage; and a few months ago one gipsy shipped forty such horses on board a vessel bound for Canada. We congratulate the Canadians on their bargain. This class of gipsies live mostly in tents, when they are not in their town residences. They dress respectably, look more like horse-dealers than gipsies, and are not timid about appearing in “society.” Their fine appearance makes them an object of attraction, if not admiration,

to people in the country, who, I am informed, frequently go out of town to see them. They resemble the upper class of costermongers in many respects : certainly in cleanliness. They are remarkable, as a class, for sobriety. There is but little unblushing immorality among them, and they disown all females who break the laws of chastity. Owing to their mixing up with persons of superior habits, they have learnt most of the customs of civilised life. It is somewhat singular that they should have a marked regard for the Sabbath-day ; but it is with them merely a matter of custom, not of religious feeling. There are some peculiar traces of superstition among them. They have a strong dislike to eating meat on Good Friday, considering it to be no less than cutting up the flesh of Christ. One respectable gipsy remarked to Mr. Burns, on one occasion, that he should like to be shut up for twelve months so that he might think and talk about religious things with the missionary, as though it were an impossibility for a man to be converted unless he had a long preparatory training. Happily there is a growing enlightenment among this class, and it is believed that there are a goodly number of Christians among them, though they manifest an uncommon shyness about entering places of worship.

The *second* class consists of those gipsies who are constant attendants at fairs, race-courses, picnics, &c., and who gain a decent livelihood by letting out their donkeys for riding purposes. These gipsies are tolerably well known at Sunday-school summer gatherings. They look out for excursions, and by travelling all night, if necessary, they are sure to be in readiness for a job. When in a forest they will send out a few scouting parties to report the precise position of excursionists, and in this way they do a profitable business. This class is not so scrupulous as to breaking the Sabbath. Indeed, they run their donkeys on that day as on others, while the girls and boys take charge of certain poles, which are crowned by hollow cocoa-nuts, the purpose of which they publicly announce by a shrieking cry, "Three shies a penny." They are inferior intellectually to the more aristocratic gipsies ; they believe in God, in heaven, and hell, but as to any knowledge of redemption, and the gospel-revelation, they are perfectly ignorant. "We were like heathens a few years ago," said one gipsy woman speaking of her family, "and we should still have been like them if God hadn't sent the missionary to us." These

words read coldly perhaps ; but they were most lovingly, and heartily uttered. Some of the gipsies go to a christening to give their children a name—"that's all we can do for them," gravely remarked a gipsy, on one occasion, to the minister—and to weddings, when those rare occurrences are known to take place ; but this is the extent of their religious observances.

The *third* class consists of the lowest type of gipsies. In the winter there is no distinction between the second and third classes ; for they both herd together when living in houses. But this last class are distinguished from the others inasmuch as they have neither horses nor donkeys of their own, and so, and as my friend assures me "they shift as they can." Indeed, in that homely phrase is comprised all their doings both of honesty and rascality. They carry chairs, sell skewers, rob poultry-yards, steal the smallest trifles, and tell fortunes. The gipsies who sell brooms, mats, &c., and travel in vans, are provided with a license, and these persons can hardly be denominated London gipsies, as they are essentially roving tradesmen. The women feel it a necessity, pleasant or not, it matters but little, to support their husbands, who nurse the babies, make skewers, or idle about while their acknowledged wives prey upon the credulity of servant girls.

I have said "acknowledged wives." It is necessary that the impression which seems to prevail extensively, that gipsies are notorious for chastity, should be set right. It is to be regretted that so far from this being the case, gipsies are, with certain honourable exceptions amongst the more respectable, almost dead to all moral perceptions. Nor do they attempt to conceal their iniquity. A missionary, finding that two young persons, about seventeen years of age, in whom he had taken some interest, were disposed to be married, asked the consent of the boy's father to the union. The father replied that he should first let them go into the country to live together for three months, by way of trial. The reader would be shocked to learn the unblushing depravity which exists among this class—a depravity due undoubtedly to the constant association, in one tent, or in one small room, of perhaps fourteen or fifteen persons of both sexes. With some women a month's acquaintance with a man is long enough, especially if another one will, at the end of that time, "make love to them." Some of the poorer classes would probably be married

were it not for the fees. One of the City Mission's agents took seventeen couples to a church where they could be married for nothing, the mission paying the requisite small registration fee. Few of this lower class of gipsies can read, and those who do have been taught by the missionary.

Among all classes fortune-telling prevails—the second and third class mostly. Some of these fortune-tellers pay a given sum for the right of carrying on their business in pleasure-grounds and tea-gardens, and a more reprehensible practice, attended as it often is by the vilest evils, cannot be imagined. Of course, the greater number gain access to servant girls under the pretence of selling useful articles, and so prey upon their weak-mindedness. These impostors often get considerable sums of money in one day; indeed, one gipsy acknowledged that she deemed it “a bad day” if she did not get £5 by her acuteness and other people's folly. I enquired of Mr. Burns how it was they were able to discern the mental weakness of their dupes. He informed me, in reply, that one woman sounded the girls (obliquely I suppose) at first, and when she found them “soft,” took more money from them. Frequently, however, they gain a clue to the character and circumstances of their dupes, and they will obtain in a kind of mystic hyplay, further particulars from the girls themselves. Consequently their victory is frequently easy. Two or three curious instances have been mentioned to me, which though laughable in themselves, have a sad aspect. A young man on horseback met a gipsy, who offered to tell him his fortune. Instead of accepting the offer, he gave the woman half-a-crown to go to a certain house and tell the fortune of a servant girl who was about to be married in a few days to a person whom he described. Through this girl, she was requested to obtain access to the young mistress, to whom the gentleman in question had ineffectually paid his addresses. The gipsy succeeded admirably with the servant, who, wild with surprise at the truthfulness of the gipsy's revelation to her, ran up stairs to the young mistress, who, thereupon, ordered the gipsy upstairs. The fortune-teller, after the preliminary incantations (or whatever they are termed), assured the young lady that she had had two offers of marriage from a handsome gentleman (describing the rider on horseback), and she would soon have a third offer from the same person; but if she rejected it she would never receive another

proposal. It is hardly necessary to add that the young man's griefs were quickly at an end, and the marriage bells soon told out their pleasant tales. This instance is only one out of several I could give; but I have better things in hand.

The state of religious knowledge among the gipsies may be gathered from the following incidents:—Speaking to a lad about fifteen years of age, a missionary said that, when he asked him concerning his soul, the boy turned upon him a pair of penetrating eyes, and said, “A soul! what’s that?”—“Did you never hear of the soul which we all have in our bodies?” No, sir.” “What becomes of you when you die?” “I goes under the ground,” he replied, pointing at the same time to the earth. “Did you ever hear of heaven or hell?” “No!” “Did you ever hear of Jesus Christ?” “No!” Mr. Burns once visited a man in a tent, in Rotherhithe, and talked to him, while he was engaged in making skewers, respecting the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. He was interrupted by the man calling out in amazement, “Bless me! is that good man dead? I never heard of it before.” This ignorance, however, is far less difficult to deal with than cases similar to that of a woman occupying a very small shop, who, in answer to the question, “Whether she ever read the Bible,” replied, “No; she liked Genesis, but she didn’t care for the New Testament, which would do for the lower classes of people.”

My friend, the missionary—who is a type of what such a person should be in kindness of heart—enlists the sympathies of the gipsies in various ways; and he finds out his parishioners (pardon the expression) by asking, “Do you know any friends you would like me to talk to?” By occasionally carrying messages to and fro, he secures the friendship of all parties, who rejoice in him and in his ministrations. At Epsom races he will visit some two hundred families, many of whom come from a distance of two hundred and fifty miles. By a new-comer he is at first treated with indifference, yet always with a certain measure of respect. In one case he read the circumstances connected with the death of Lazarus, when he was told that all he had said was suitable enough for rich people like the selfish man in torments, for they wanted it most: rich people now-a-days wouldn’t let a poor man beg for a crust of bread.” Mr. Burns replied that, “The rich men could read their Bibles and have their ministers to tell them what was right; but the City Mission did not want the gipsies to

be without the benefits of the gospel, and so they had sent him among them." The men, thereupon, listened attentively, and one was converted, and soon after, on his death-bed, testified to the blessedness of the change that had been wrought in him.

One good feature in a gipsy is his desire of acquiring knowledge. They confess their delight in hearing the Scriptures expounded, and, indeed, this is the general feeling of all illiterate persons. They frequently ask the meaning of the words, "being converted," "born again," and so on. One gipsy, a fortune-teller, enquired of a missionary what was the meaning of Christ's words, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." The reply was that, "If sin was as dear to a person as his right hand, he was to cut it off." The woman said, "I see it entirely. My sin of telling fortunes must be cut off, although it has been as dear to me as my right hand, since by it I have supported my husband and nine children." From Mr. Burns's unpublished journal, I learn that fortune-telling is greatly encouraged by ladies:—"Mrs. — during my visit, told me of the temptations she had from ladies to go back to her sin of fortune-telling, but she had answered them that she would die in the workhouse before she would go back to serve the devil, or to please them. They offered, she said, to support her and her family if she would but tell them their fortunes, and nobody's else. But no! 'she would not falsify her word.' They then said, 'If the queen was to come, would you not?' She replied, 'No!' 'But the queen could compel you!' This roused her indignation, and opening the door, she said, 'Good bye, ladies, I hope I shan't see you no more.' So they departed and have not troubled her since." Of course, fortune-telling is given up immediately after conversion. One converted gipsy-woman has lost £100 by her consistency in this respect; and this firmness of principle is a noble trait in their Christian character. They know how to make sacrifices for the truth, and prefer the washtub and poverty to sin and riches, when once they have tasted the freedom of Christ's gospel. When they are thoroughly enlightened on the truths of redemption, they acknowledge their responsibility to God. "If I am not saved, I know it will be my own fault," remarked one to the missionary, "for I know many things now which I never knew before." They are also acute in most matters. A traveller, but not a pure gipsy, boasted that she had once beaten Dr. Wiseman, before

he was a cardinal, in an argument she had held with him about the Bible. The children are quick in receiving truth, and in giving it some practical issues ; in this way, under God's blessing, mothers and fathers have been brought to a knowledge of the gospel.

Mr. Burns has a happy method of conveying instruction. He once found a gipsy making beehives. He began to tell him of the busy bees which would some day inhabit the hive, and of their method of treating the "shining hours," pressing upon him the necessity of improving his opportunities for eternity ere they flitted away. He finds the historical portions of the Scriptures the most acceptable to those ignorant of the Word, and the story of Joseph's life is most greedily devoured by them. Although it cannot be ascertained how many conversions have taken place, yet there is little doubt that this one missionary has done much good in enlightening the dark minds of many of this race. There is a desire for listening to the good news of salvation, and it is most cheering to witness a group of gipsies listening to the golden truths of the gospel.

I have seen several letters addressed by converted gipsies to their missionary, and the spelling, writing, and composition, are exceedingly creditable to their authors. Such hearty letters would gladden any evangelist's heart. They are grand evidences of the irresistible power of divine grace in the souls of this supposed dangerous class of outcasts. The following letter was written by a young gipsy, of comely appearance, and considerable intelligence, who occupies a comfortable situation in the city. He is a member of a Christian church, and occasionally, I believe, he preaches :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I thank God I have the blessed privilege of writing to tell you a little of my experience. I feel, too, sir, I am saved through the blood of Jesus Christ. I am nothing of myself. If I was left alone I should soon go wrong ; but I trust in Jesus our Saviour. I don't want only to profess religion, but I want to show it in my daily walk, that my life may be a profitable sermon. I am very much in the office alone, and when I am alone and without occupation, something tells me to pray. Well, I think to myself, some one might come in and catch me ; still I cannot rest until I do, and I am very much blest. One day when I was praying, I felt as if I saw Jesus and angels on the ceiling, I felt so happy I did not know what to do. In fact, whenever I pray, it appears I speak to Jesus individually. But I often have dark clouds come over my mind, and then I pray, and they are soon dispersed. Thanks be to God for this blessed religion. I used to be afraid of death, but now death will be joy to me—what a

blessed thing this is ! It appears to me now as if I should be happy, if I only had dry bread to eat.

" Dear Sir,—If it pleases God, when I become a man, or as soon as I can, I will be a missionary. It appears to me as if there is something very often saying to me as follows : ' Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.' Matt. xxi. 28. Therefore I feel it is my duty to work for my Father, my everlasting Father ! "

I intended closing this paper by commending the work of the City Mission to the sympathy and support of the reader ; but there is little or no need to do with words what facts can best perform. The quiet, almost unobservant, character of the work done by the missionaries employed by this excellent society, carries with it its own commendation. Thousands will have to acknowledge their best indebtedness to the faithful teaching of the simple-hearted men who, with no great intellectual gifts, but with the graces of a meek and lowly spirit, and the gift of earnest Christian activity, search for lost pieces of silver from the dust-heaps of sin and iniquity. Such work carries its own reward—such work claims the Christian regard and support. Three hundred and seventy-one missionaries are engaged in this service every day, and the amount of good done among the homes of the poor cannot be fully estimated until the day arrives when all secrets shall be revealed.

CHAPTER IX.

CHIMNEY-SWEEPERS.

THERE is a prominent organ of the face which, it is said, humanity invariably follows. It may be convenient that this useful organ should have so great an honour bestowed upon it ; but it is not always desirable that in every step of our pilgrimage it should be exceedingly sensitive. In visiting certain fragrant nooks and corners of England's vast metropolitan world, it may be well to nerve our symmetrical and highly-delicate nostrils by a little administration of some camphorated essence or otto of roses. And since it is impossible for us to refuse to follow nature's guide-post, we must endeavour, with that becoming patience which beareth all things, submissively to bend to our fate, in the hope that the application of a sort of moral smelling-bottle may restore us to our normal condition of sensitiveness. Yet we lack not nicety of judgment or taste in selecting a series of

subjects for sketches that may offend the squeamish. We may not dislike the utmost delicacy even when we bear with a few whiffs from an atmosphere less charged with pure oxygen than we would desire it to be, while it may be for the good of those who are compelled daily to breathe it, that we should learn something of their circumstances and unfortunate condition. We write for Christian hearts and minds, for those who can heartily say, in the words of a German commentator—"Although nothing further is said or heard of us in the world than this—That man takes pains to save sinners by the gospel, and his labour is not fruitless; here a sinner is apprehended, there one sighs after grace; there one rejoices over the peace of his soul, that one walks according to the gospel, and all regard the man as a faithful example—that is an abiding praise before God." To gratify the curious is not our aim. Whatever may tend to enlighten the Christian public on the spiritual wants of the poorest of the London poor, will be considered and pressed into service. Our sole desire is to honour Christian religion by pointing out special and unlooked—for means of Christian usefulness. As far as possible, the facts we give shall be fresh and verified by observation. There are thousands of poor people living in London, working at all kinds of odd trades, who have scarcely as yet been touched by religious agencies. There is a vast quantity of activity abroad—some of it of a very questionable character, but the major portion in the result of earnest, honest, self-denying Christianity. But with all the machinery, voluntary and paid, that is put in motion, the fringe of London's vice and ungodliness has only been touched, and the heart of the evil has not been reached.

We begin with a chat on the chimney-sweepers. Even a dark subject may be fairly treated, and while there is much that is disagreeable to relate, there is something encouraging to reveal. For though sweeps are nigrescent subjects of her Gracious Majesty—developing naturally day by day by some professional law of progression from "innocent blacknesses," "dim specs," and "young Africans" into genuine disciples of King Ebony, yet they are getting to be of more cleanly habits. Unlike Mr. Disraeli, the sweep must not declare himself to be on the angel's side, for it would only suggest a cruel question as to which type of angel it might be. He resembles the Negro in his love for oleaginousness, though with the introduction of sweeping-machines, he has lost some of his

inclinations for greasy and fatty food. Like most trades, there are several classes of workmen, and if we deal largely with the lower class of sweeps, it is not because we prefer them most, but deem them most-needing missionary effort.

Dear reader, you doubtless recall to memory the dismal dreams you had in childhood of these youthful lovers of stifling darkness rather than cheerful light. What pictures of prospective misery were painted on your susceptible retina! horrors which would surely be realised if you did not submit to the servant-girl's dogma of good works. Charles Lamb tells us that when a child it was a mysterious pleasure to him to "see a chit no bigger than oneself enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the *fauces Averni*—to pursue him in imagination as he went sounding on through so many dark stifling caverns, horrid shades! to shudder with the idea that 'now surely he must be lost for ever'—to revive at hearing his feeble shout of discovered day-light—and then (oh, fulness of delight!) running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious, like some flag waved over a conquered citadel." Far less poetic was our experience. We were to be good—and it was hard work; or we were to be reduced to a servitude not particularly pleasant to the youthful mind. The present generation of impressible boys is not subject to these nursery demons. The young climbers of a bygone age of moral gloominess are gone. In their place we have grown-up men still more horrid in their grim conventionalities. These fully developed chimney-sweepers constitute a new order of creation. They are unrelated to society. It does not acknowledge them as brothers—veritable flesh and blood. Who can sympathise with soot? Who can associate with these sable knights of the telescopic rod and soot-bag? So society uses them, pays per swept chimney, and allows them to depart in peace. They do so depart, for sweeps are not a quarrelsome, discontented, or ungrateful race. They go home with "the vile dust" they have gathered, and, so far as the public is concerned, they are "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung." Our missionary and anti-alcoholic friends are left to try their powers of persuasion with them, and, in some cases, they have well succeeded.

Most of the London chimney-sweepers are not distinguished for respectability. They work well, fare better, and swear best. The

minority consist of rather intelligent men, whose business is confined to the upper and middle classes of dwellings (and presumably of chimneys). The master-men are frequently intelligent, and a certain test of respectability is to be found when you have discovered where they keep their soot. None but the poorest would store soot in their bed-rooms; and among the higher classes of sweeps, a cellar or shed is always provided for the reception of their sacks. Mr. Mayhew, who has contributed more than anyone to soot-lore—some of it being rather apocryphal—has made a proper classification of these individuals, and has very graphically described their mental, moral, and social condition. He found what, from enquiry, we have learnt to be largely correct, namely, that they are a short-lived people, which we believe is to be attributed to their drunken habits; that many suffer from a cancer peculiar to the trade, which probably has its origin in uncleanly habits, for it is rare to find a sweep washing himself once a day; and a sweep has informed us that the majority of the lower class never wash more than once a month. Some sweeps acknowledge that they have vomited balls of soot. The lower class have the same simple ideas of constituted authority as the costermonger. The police, to them, are the rulers of the world. Their sympathies are wholly with rioters. "The sweeps," says Mr. Mayhew, "have a sovereign contempt for all acts of parliament, because the only act that had any reference to themselves 'threw open,' as they call it, their business to all who were needy enough and who had the capability of availing themselves of it." They pick out their concubines—for the lower class is generally regardless of the marriage ceremony—from those street girls who have as little love for morality as their consorts. Their children, it is said, are few in number, and are brought up to be blackguards and street rovers. One of the fraternity, who had served an apprenticeship of seven years to the trade, made a statement relative to his class, in which he said:—"Our people don't care much about law; they don't understand anything about politics much; they don't mind things of that 'ere kind. They only minds to get drunk when they can. Some on them fellows as you see'd in there niver cleans theirselves from one year's end to t' other." The men complain that their business is ruined by what they term "querrying," i.e., asking for work at different houses.

We attended, one Sabbath evening, a meeting for sweeps at the Lambeth Baths, that was organised by Mr. Murphy, of Southwark. It had been announced that the audience would be addressed by men of the class invited. There was a large attendance, although one-half of those present were not sweeps, but were working men generally. Hymns were sung, prayers offered, and we remember that during even the most devotional parts of the service, there were fallen women, who had mingled with the crowd, who were plying their infamous trade, while costermongers' lads were grinning and chattering irreverently in groups of three or four during the proceedings. One master chimney sweep—an intelligent young man, who spoke correctly and modestly—told the story of his own conversion, and very pleasantly entreated his “mates” to accept the provisions of the gospel. He had tried the pleasures of sin for a pretty long season, but he had never discovered true happiness until he found it at the Cross. The next speaker was a striking contrast to the previous one. He was about sixty years of age. His chubby head, receding forehead, broad jaw—always indicative of animal propensities—told plainly the characteristics of the man. The maternal washings, as Lamb would say, had long been effaced from the cheek, and there was but little trace of subsequent ablutions. He was a master sweeper, he said, and had known what it was to earn his five pounds a week. Until within the last few years he had been a very great blackguard—“no mistake about me”—and we thought so too. “I used to get drunk nearly every night. You knows that.” Here there was an affirmative answer or two from his “mates” on the platform. “I went home at night, whopped (beat) my wife; my wife would have a little drink too, and she used to whop me back again.” For some ten minutes or so, he went on describing the villainies of his life, showing how disgustingly low human nature may sink, but we need not follow him through revelations which shocked every sensitive ear. From his address we could not gather whether he had been converted by God’s grace. He attributed his change of life to teetotalism, which he recommended to all his “mates” as the only thing that could lift them out of their degradation. It was essentially a temperance address—a glorification of total abstinence as the gospel for the working classes. Having been a rabid drunkard, he had become a rabid teetotaller. His God had been his belly: now his

abstinence was his God. All sensible Christian abstainers must deprecate the exaltation of the gospel of teetotalism at the expense of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; and we regret to observe the sad mistake made in certain places of hiring halls for temperance harangues on Sunday evenings. The third chimney sweep who spoke, wisely put the social principles he held dear in their proper place, and descanted on the importance of not being satisfied with a mere outward change—the leprosy of soul lies deep within. There are many who are trusting in the reformation of their social habits. “Are you a Christian?” you ask, and meet with the reply, “No, sir, but I’m a teetotaller.”

Operative chimney sweepers, though frequently sharp-witted, have but little perception of the alphabet of religious truth. They manifest their ignorance in their speech. Indeed it is very sad to observe the curious notions prevalent among those who do not attend public worship, as to what Christianity is. A city missionary on one occasion was urging a poor, shatteringly woman to teach her three dirty, shoe and stockingless children to call upon God in their youth, when he was interrupted by the remark, “Yes, sir, and do you know my children says their prayers every night! they have learned a werry nice prayer—

“Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,

Bless the bed that I lay on.”

And she wanted to know whether that was not a good prayer to teach her children. Dr. Livingstone’s description of the curious beliefs of the Tette blacks might almost be applied to the heathen blacks at home. Both believe there are spirits in the air, and that drinking beer is the best way of propitiating their favour. “The uncontaminated Africans,” observes the doctor, “believe that Morungo, the Great Spirit who formed all things, lives above the stars; but they never pray to him, and know nothing of their relation to him, or of his interest in them.” The chimney sweepers have similar ideas as to their relation to the Almighty, who, they consider, cares as little for them as do their fellow men in superior positions of life. Indeed, our readers would be startled, to listen to the confessions of ignorance of religious truth so frequently made by this unfortunate class. That we are not misrepresenting the character of the men of whom we are writing, we will give a speech

made by a Bermondsey sweep, who was converted in the Victoria Theatre, and of the truthfulness of whose narrative we have received confirmatory evidence. He said, "I am well known to many of you here, and those of you who do know me, know that I have been one of the vilest of the vile. There are plenty living in Bermondsey who know me as being a drunkard and swearer, and everything else that's bad, and so I continued up to the time that I went to the Victoria Theatre. Well, the Lord Jesus took hold of me, a dirty, black, drunken, blackguard sweep, and saved me. A dear brother that's sitting over there, took a good deal more trouble with me than ever I took with myself. He came after me lots of times to try to get me with him to the preaching at the Victoria Theatre: so after he had come so many times, at last I said, 'Very well, 'Whippy,' so I will. So I went to the theatre this night and sure enough, whilst I was listening to Mr. Carter, all the whole of my weight of wickedness came down upon me, all my sins struck me at once: so I'll leave you to guess how I felt, for I was, as I told before, a dirty, drunken sot. I was all bad, and no good at all. You may depend upon it, I was miserable and wretched. So, after the preaching, I was in the pit of the theatre, and I felt as if I should soon be sinking in the pit of hell. Just then, Mr. Carter came and touched me. He put his hand upon my shoulder, and it seemed to me just as though it was an angel from heaven: for, in a moment, I felt such happiness and joy that I can't tell you. I saw Jesus plain enough though, and my sins was all gone: and now the Lord has made me happy, and the Lord has taught me to pray to God for my wife and many others. I bless God that now every night I kneel on my knees, and my wife too goes down on her knees to pray; but she keeps it all to herself, she does not let you hear anything that she prays [his wife is a Roman Catholic], but blessed be my Jesus, I am not so greedy. I don't mind letting all the people in the house hear me pray. Now, I'm not ashamed to own that, before I was converted, I lived with my wife, although she was not my wife: but as soon as ever I was converted I knew at once that was wrong, so I told her I would not live with her any longer, unless we was married. My friend who first took me to the theatre asked me about sitting down to the table of the Lord and about baptism; but I said, 'No, not till that little job was done.' And now, my

• dear brothers and sisters, if there's any of you here that's living as I was, let me ask you to go and do as I have done. Come, be up to your work; and if you can't get the money together to be married with, borrow it of somebody, and then be honest enough to pay it back again."

There can be no doubt that "poor chimney" is an impressible being. He may be reclaimed. Indeed, teetotal principles have done much for him. And those who have held special meetings for chimney sweeps, have reported favourably of the attention manifested, and the gratitude expressed for good counsel. It is curious to observe how simple and untechnical their language is when they describe their conversion. Theologically, as we should say, they are "nowhere." They have not had time to regard the five points. Indeed, they do not know what they are. But they can express themselves satisfactorily on this point, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." This simple testimony to us is a charm: to some hypocritical religionists, who never pardon doctrinal deficiencies, it is evidence of delusion or insincerity. Here, for instance, is a curious speech from a converted sweep, which will shock narrow-souled sceptics:—"Dear brethren:—When I fust cum into this here hall, thirteen months ago, to a chimbley sweepers' tea-meeting, I was a hignorant, drunken sweep; I used to spend all my money at the public house, and my wife had to goo and work in the dustyard to get bread. When I cum to that here sweeps' meetin, I know'd nothink about Jesus, I never heer'd his name oncy in swearin', and I never know'd I'd got a soul'd, but when Muster ——— lifted up Jesus and holler'd out, Eternity! eternity!! eternity!!! I felt horful, and cried very much. Arterwoods, when the preacher spoke to me and told me that God loved me, and that Jesus died for me on the cross, I was very glad to believe it. Well, I went home and got to bed, but couldn't sleep, so I got out o' bed agin' and for the fust time in my life prayed to Jesus. My wife ast me what was the matter wi' me, and I told her that I had bin to the sweeps' tea-meetin, and they said that I was conwarted; I didn't know what being conwarted meant then, but I do now tho'; I can read this here (holding up a Bible), and I know what the Lord Jesus said is true, 'You must be borned agin,' and I know that I am borned agin, I am a new man. Why I'm a changed man altogether, my wife knows it very well. I don't goo to the

public-house now, and I keeps my wife at home to see arter the house instid of working herself to death in the dustyard. Now, what the Lord has done for me, he can and wull do for you, if you'll onely trust him. I hope the Lord ull save all on yer, that's all I've got to say."

Other similar stories might be recorded; but what we have given will indicate sufficiently the nature of the whole. So far as we have been enabled to discover, there are no special organisations at work for this class, and the Christian activities should not be confined to any particular class of artisans, excepting under local circumstances. To do so is only to foster a spirit of trade isolation and a hateful feeling of caste. And as the chimney sweepers are to be found in all parts of London, it would not be easy to open mission-rooms for their special benefit. But evangelists, like Mr. Carter and Mr. Murphy, who seek to bring the men together to partake of a social repast, and to preach Jesus Christ to them, deserve all the encouragement which the Christian public can afford. Nor can we omit to add that the Primitive Methodists have been greatly useful in evangelising among the chimney sweepers of London: there can be no doubt that they have been far more successful in this work than any other denomination.

CHAPTER X.

DAY CABMEN.

"No Lamps!" inscribed on every London cab! "No Lamps!" shouted by burly voices into wondering ears. "Ah! Lamps!"—the friendly recognition of familiar companions—the saucy, run-away shriek of mischievous, playful boys. "'No lamps!' but did cabs ever have any?" was the puzzled enquiry inwardly made by many surprised Londoners. "'No lamps!' but who ever wanted any?" asked a similarly bewildered citizen. "What, no lamps!" thought others, who imagined a conspiracy was on foot for the extinction of all street light, "and are we to return to Egyptian darkness—to the days when all good people went home at dusk, and, at the toll of curfew bell, put out the fire and went to bed?" The cry took the city by surprise. Lamps, and their proscription, became, for the nonce, the song of the drunkard, the jest of the street wit, the watchword of cabby's freedom and public rights. The Home Office,

that mysterious repository of late of social grievances, many and diverse, was again threatened with a storm of popular fury, most dangerous to the official mind—always so calm and placid, because seldom overworked. Cabs were withdrawn in the evening, the drivers merrily tramping to Exeter Hall, “chaffing” each other most indecorously all the way, upsetting any unfortunate cab, the owner of which, craven-like, refused to swell the ranks of the oppressed, and threatening others that were running beyond the hour of call. At two crowded meetings, the loud hoarse cry, from clamorous cabmen, of “No lamps!” went up to the Home Office, and was heard so effectively that it speedily brought official relief. “What a fuss,” we remarked to a respectable-looking cabman, “about a little oil.” “Ah, sir,” replied he, “it isn’t the ‘ile : ‘ile’s cheap. Nor is it the lamps, for they’s ornamental. But it’s the oppression generally. What’s government coming to now-a-days? Dickey Mayne is always up to summat. People think lamps are a benefit, but they isn’t. Many’s the man that has been run over ‘cos of them. They deceive yer on a dark night. I knew a ‘bus driver who saw a cab coming along, and thought he would jist find time to walk across the road, when down came the cab on him and broke his leg. No, sir, lamps is only Dickey’s excuse for oppressing us, and our guv’nors won’t stand it;” and so saying, cabby drew himself up with feelings of pride at the resolution of his employers. In one of the daily prints, a cabman is supposed to relate his numerous grievances, which he does in a most original way. On the day of the strike, he determined to hire an “unhappy bein’” to see “how many of Dickey’s rules and regulations he broke in the course of a six-mile drive.” At the conclusion of the drive, so this somewhat fanciful story goes, the self-styled “invalid cabman” convicted the “unhappy bein’” of breaking a number of Acts of Parliament, which he does in the following language :—

“That’ll do, cabman,” sez I, in a graceful tone, “you have broke the First and Second of Villiam, cap. 22, sec. 28, makin’ use of abusive langwidge and gestures—penalty, three pounds or a couple of months. And now we’re on the subject, ‘raps you’d like to know what other Acts you’ve run into durin’ the short time we have been so ‘quainted. In the fust place, you grazed 1st and 2nd Vic., c. 86, sec. 83, by loiterin’ and plyin’ for hire off a stand—penalty, a pound, which makes four pound : you had hardly got clear of that before you bumped agin the 16 and 17, sec. 11 of the same, by neglectin’ to take sum lost property

—to wit, a tobakky pipe—to Scotland yard. As if you hadn't done enuff damije to Villiam, you must have another fling at the 1st and 2nd, cap. 22, sec. 50, by sufferin' another pusson to ride on your vehaycle without the consent of the hirer—to wit, me—penalty twenty shillings, as before, which makex five pounds o' damije, or four weeks, in less than a quarter of an hour. So far, so good, cabman. Arter that you has another shy at the 1st and 2nd of Villiam, by leaving your vehaycle unattended while you went to drink, whereby you forfeited one pound more, which makes six pound. Next you collide with is the 16th and 17th Vic., cap. 33, sec. 17, where you are ordered to drive six mile a hour, unless spechially hired by time, whereas you have only driven me that distance in a hour and a half—but never mind, it's only another forty shillings, or another month, which makes jest eight pound. Still bent on mischief agin the 16th and 17th Vic., you negleck to carry with you a book of fares, "for the information of the person, etceetery," meanin' me—penalty forty shillings more, or a month more, which brings it up to to ten pound, or three month. Don't fancy the 16th and 17th of ditto has done with you yet. It hasn't. By sec. 8, you ought to carry a card, and you didn't—likewise two pound, or one month. So take your choice; which makes twelve pound, or four months, both even numbers. Arter that, as you wouldn't leave one brick standing upon another in Villiam's house, you go back and overturn his 1st and 2nd, c. 22, s. 20, in giving a wrong number by word of mouth—penalty five pound more, which brings it up to seventeen pound. Then, it seems, you changed your abode without having it endorsed on your license by Dickey Mayne—penalty, twenty bob, see 6 and 7 Vic., sec. 15. This makes eighteen pound, cabman; but you are not obliged to pay if you have a consientious objectshun—you can serve the four months." This, of course, is a caricature; but it really represents, though in exaggerated language and with the aid of fanciful pictures, the grievances of this class of men. They are surrounded by clumsy Acts of Parliament, which, if enforced, would make their lives simply unbearable. "The very moment a cabman takes his seat on his box," we are told, "he becomes liable to a penalty of fifty pounds—that is to say, such is the sum total of the fines that may be levied on him for neglecting to perform the duties of his calling." Let us hope their difficulties may be speedily and pleasantly adjusted, and, if so, the waving, in Exeter Hall, of 3,000 black hats will not have been without a good purpose.

Cabmen may be divided either into two or three classes—into day cabmen and night cabmen, or long day, short-day, and night cabmen. We take the responsibility of making these distinctions, but we believe their accuracy to be unquestionable. The day cabman is decidedly more intelligent than the night worker, of whom we shall have much to say in our next chapter. Indeed, there are hundreds of

cabmen especially the younger men, of respectable character, considerable intelligence, and good morals. If we attempt to portray an old "stager," who may be regarded as typical of a large number of his class, let no reader imagine we are so blind as to regard all cabmen alike. There is scarcely a class of men in the whole earth in whose characters both light and shade may not be found. Generalisations are both vague and deceptive. The elements that go to make up one picture are diversely scattered in another. What Mr. Matthew Arnold calls "light and sweetness" may be found in some cabmen as well as in some Philistines. It may be subdued light, of course, and a "mingled sweetness long drawn out," but we must accept what nature affords.

The cabman of satirical prints *does* belong to a past generation. A new order of cabmen has come in; but the old has not gone out. He is an old "stager," and understands "hoss" flesh perhaps better than human flesh. Looking at him out of my window, I see him patiently waiting for some seemingly inconsiderate customers. It is a bitterly cold, snowy day; yet he is attempting to whistle, and is wildly beating his hands together to keep time. The old "stager" lives in a world of his own; but, unlike the Yankee, does not consider that world to revolve on its own axis, subject to his own, or "the American constitution." He has his pet theories, and nurses them. His vision is contracted on some things—enlarged on others. He enjoys his newspaper, and relishes his beer. He is gladdened by professional glad tidings, and is comforted by hot rum-and-water. He is honoured for his natural wit, and is enlivened, spurred, and sometimes maddened, by the wit of others. He understands betting, but dislikes losing. He has a wide circle of acquaintances, all of them touched with the same mental fancies. He knows the full history of "Tom," with whose daily "makings" he is conversant, and understands the manifold weaknesses of "Bob." He recognises them by some friendly salute that would be indecorous to any one out of his peculiar freemasonry; he calls them by names by which they were never christened, save by himself. He is kind hearted to children, especially young girls; he is hard hearted to the little *gamins*, whose annoyance in the street is aggravated by the impossibility of his reaching them with his whip. He laughs provokingly, yet fraternally, at the toiling anxieties of

the traffic-impeding costermonger, and growls savagely at the officiousness of the policeman. He is won by the kindness that adds an extra shilling to his fare: he is repelled by the client who "bates" him in his prices. To the one he is either amiable or stolidly indifferent—to the other he is indignant or peppery. To his regular customers, who know his fare, he is businesslike and civil; to his irregular or greener customers he is sometimes thankful and imposing. He is gallant to the well-paying fair sex, but to the "screwing" fair, or, as he naughtily regards them, *unfair*, sex, whom he protests constitute the larger portion, he is positively rude, and wishes they were of sterner, manlier build ("Lawks," says he, "some of 'em is manly enough") that he might either fight them with the law or with his fists. The latter he regards as the readier and more sensible way; but society, he knows, is against him. He has the spirit of discernment, which a glass of spirits wonderfully quickens; and a man is none the less a gentleman in his estimation when he affords this acceptable aid. He has enough to provoke his temper, and more to try his patience. He has frequently a painful conflict with rough weather and howling winds. These are the foes of his peace and of his personal appearance. He is subject to a series of physical plagues; sometimes sore with disease, tormented with ague, disabled by gout, bloated by intemperance, exhausted by long hours of labour. His enemies are, he thinks, ever ready to annoy him, but he is ever ready to annoy them. He seldom gets blocked up in the streets without exercising his lungs, manifesting his temper, threatening to use his whip, or actually using his truculence, incisive, and always personal wit. Like the costermonger, he would sing a "requiem" over the dead body of pugilism; and like the costermonger, he would transport all policemen who did not rigidly confine their attentions to the criminal classes. But, unlike the costermonger, he is a bit of a reading man, although his opportunities are scanty, and he has far higher notions of things on the earth and under the earth, of things seen and unseen, than the street dealer. A philosophical cabman one does not expect to see; a Christian cabman ~~one~~ may frequently meet; and when you do engage such a one, remember Lamb's advice respecting a youthful chimney sweeper, "It is good to give him a penny; it is better to give him twopence," or, as we

should say in our prosaic way, "It is good to give him his fare; it is better to give him a trifle more." Sixpence a mile is cruel treatment—in London, at least.

Christian cabmen! We have one such in our mind's eye now. God bless him! One sunny morning, voluntarily drest in his best honour of the event, he stood looking pleasantly on a scene in which a young couple were permanently interested, paying some one to take charge of his cab at the porch door meanwhile. His manly, pious, fatherly congratulations, good wishes, spontaneously, Christianly given, were among the pleasant associations of the day. It is said of him, that on Sundays he wore what he regarded as the Masters's livery, a white necktie. 'Tis indubitably true that he was a just man and devout, honestly battling in life for a small army of various-sized juvenile recruits for the father's service—consistent to the sacrifice of a good part of his weekly wage—in the world, not of it, cheerfully "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."

The grace of God be thanked! he, good man, is not the only one in his wordly occupation who manifests a godly life, as we shall see. Cabmen have had the privilege, for some years past, of receiving the visits of simple-hearted men, who have borne, as on angels' wings, the good, ever-glorious tidings of "peace on earth, good will toward men." The City Mission has special men for this class, and their work has been much blessed. Good seed has been scattered, and in many honest hearts it has grown up to the glory of God. One of these day missionaries has a very large district, which includes the Great Northern, the Great Eastern, Blackwall, and Metropolitan Railway stations, and all the city stands for omnibuses and cabs. By visiting these stations and stands he is able to drop a word in season; and he does not fail to enter into a friendly chat with any cabman who may be waiting for a fare at different places of business. Of course, judiciousness is much required in this work, but from the way in which he refers to the results of his labours, you are assured he does not repel by any untimely conversation. From his reports we learn much that is

exceedingly interesting and cheering. He tells us that there are about 6,000 cabs in London; and of these more than 2,300 are six-day ones. This was not always the case. Not many years ago, they were plied on the Sabbath, and the men were thus debarred from their day of rest. We believe that this cessation from work on one day in the week has produced very great results, morally, religiously, and physically, upon those cabmen who are thus privileged. The missionary will tell you that not only is the man more cheerful and observant, but he is more capable of serious thought. There can be no doubt that when men work fifteen hours or more a day, they should at least enjoy the rest of one day in the week. "Hard lines, sir, we have," said one cabman, somewhat dolefully, yet not complainingly, to us, "we never got home before two o'clock in the morning, and are up at work at six. Our wives don't see much of us, nor the children ('kidds,' I think he called them) either." "Bill," said one of these men to another, in our hearing, "give us that ere paper; my gal loves reading. Bless yer 'eart, she reads every word of *Lloyd's*. She would go without her grub to read." "You wouldn't, would you, Jem?" remarked his companion. "Lor bless yer, no my boy; let 'em read as likes. Books isn't in my way." It is the experience of the missionary that those who work every day alike suffer severely in mind and body: "They become so bewildered," he says, "as scarcely to know what they are doing. I know of one man who did not go to bed for several weeks because his wife had offended him, but worked his cab continually night and day; and he told me that toward the latter part of the time his mind was in such a confused state that he could not tell whether he was putting to the horse, or taking him out of harness. Here and there we may find poor men in an exactly similar state of mind, some even so bad as to require removal to lunatic asylums. There is one man now at Colney Hatch asylum, called 'Black Sam,' whose mental derangement, it is supposed, was occasioned by overwork and too frequent application to strong drink as a stimulant." Omnibus men are almost constantly employed, and their life is one continued scene of bustle. The masters ~~who~~ work only on week-days are reputed to be the best employers of labour, and many keep their drivers for a long period, some as long as ten years.

The day cabmen's missionary can refer you to not a few cases of usefulness which have occurred during the years; he has laboured among these poor men. His heart is gladdened by finding one here and there springing up, as evidences of the good done by his humble ministrations. You take a short walk with him to one of his favourite stands. He will point out men who once were careless and indifferent about divine truth, but who now are rejoicing in the Saviour's love. "That man, sir," he will tell you, "has been a blustering scoffer. He would say he didn't believe in a future existence, and that when we died there was an end of us. He wouldn't hear the message of salvation. I have known him over twenty years, and spoken to him many times. God was pleased at length to bless the conversation I had with him, and pour in upon his awakened soul his divine light." The missionary sincerely believes in the man's conversion, and is glad to find that he is an attendant on divine worship, but he is now waxing old in years, and the infirmities of the flesh are shaking him. Another cabman, a six-day proprietor and driver, though at one time one of the greatest drunkards in London (some considering him to have been without a rival in this terrible vice), is now a converted man, very anxious for divine knowledge. "I have met with him," says the missionary, "on many different stands. Those who are acquainted with him—some of whom have known him for the last twenty years—are much struck with the great change which has taken place in him, which is visible to all." Formerly he laughed to scorn all conversation about divine things, but now he meets the messenger of good tidings with a cheerful smile, an open hand, and a thankful heart. He is a poor scholar, but unlike most poor, uneducated men, he is anxious to read and study the Scriptures that make men wise unto salvation. His wife is the better for his change of heart, and both now attend divine worship. It is a noteworthy and pleasing fact, that when those who were once reprobates in life are cleansed by the influence of the Holy Spirit, the home begins to show signs of a blessed transformation. We have heard many poor men relate the circumstances of their conversion, and have frequently been struck with the sincere and honest way in which they have appealed for confirmation of their story. One invariably hears "Some of my mates say, 'But am I really converted? Isn't it a Sham?'"

And I says, 'Ax my wife if I aint'—an unfailing test, so far as change of conduct is concerned. Was it not blunt Rowland Hill who said he would not give a farthing for the religion of a man whose dog was not the better for it?

The missionary distributes a large number of tracts, and it would seem that many of these leaflets are sent by the cabmen into all parts of the country, and not a few to all parts of the world, where the men happen to have relations or friends. In some cases, the wives are solicitous about the tracts, which they readily devour. These facts deserve mentioning, since it is the fashion now-a-days to ridicule tracts altogether. A well-written tract, with no namby-pamby lackadaisical sentiment, but nanly, devout, and tersely written, always wins its way to the approval of working men. It is satisfactory to learn that teetotal principles are becoming better known and adopted among cabmen than they have ever yet been. We are informed that "the wonderful reformation as to sobriety in the cabmen of the metropolis cannot but be observed by the general public; for, whereas in years gone by, men have frequently observed many cases of drunkenness in a single day, they now do not meet with a drunken cabman during their rounds of visitation once in a month. This is a great step in the right direction, and I believe as the six-day cabs increase, the drivers will become more temperate and sober-minded." The following paragraphs from one of this missionary's reports will further evidence this change:—

"I am thankful to be able to say I can find hundreds of reformed men in the cab business. Many who have been drunkards are now become sober, thinking men. Others who were swearers and scoffers at all religion are changed, and are now quiet attendants on public worship. Numbers who were formerly careless are now clean and persevering, very fond of reading, especially the '*British Workman*,' the illustrations of which catch the eye of even the scoffer and those out of the way. Many of these men have made enquiries after me, as I have been unable to see them so often as usual, on account of having hurt my knee-cap by slipping on some orange-peel, so that I was lame and under the doctor's hands, and compelled to be on half-time. However, I have great reason to be thankful to God, for some of the most unlikely men have become awakened, and have enquired for me.

"I find many drivers who were in the habit of drinking to excess have become staunch abstainers from all intoxicating liquors, thereby rendering their homes much more comfortable, and their wives and families many degrees happier; for they have now no cause to dread the arrival of their husbands and fathers, knowing that they have given over their habits of intemperance. There are

some of these men who are in the habit of attending divine worship ; while others, although not yet visitors at God's house, have become much better husbands and fathers, and more faithful servants. Some of them are proprietors. This system of total abstinence never fails to make the man more careful and attentive to his outward appearance ; while at the same time it is a strong weapon of defence against the temptations of the riders, who in numberless cases have made the driver drink, who has thus lost his situation, while not a few have by this source lost their licences, and so become poverty-stricken men, and unable again to raise themselves."

CHAPTER XI.

NIGHT CABMEN.

It is midnight. A church clock strikes *one*. Sundry other church clocks, far and near, strike one also. Some, with their wonted courtesy, give warning by a merry peal of bells ; others, open throats, unceremoniously jerk out their message to a sleeping city. One loud boom from the Clock Tower of Parliament House comes sweeping past in noisy, yet majestic, rivalry ; and its cannon-roar is followed by a number of pellet-gun shots from adjacent steeples. Some clocks in the rear, after due and serious reflection, varying from one to five minutes in length, follow suit. All kinds of tones contribute to the midnight disharmony ; some impart their information in deep bass, others in clear alto, others in squeaking, expiring treble ; some are loud, some hoarse, others modestly tinkling and solemnly lingering, as if proud of the opportunity of adding to people's stock of knowledge, or as if old Father Time had not quite made up his mind to trouble anyone with his progress. Sharp, cold winds, deep frost, falling snow ! A bitter morning this ! One poor clock, half-frozen, answers affirmatively by striking One. The city, like a water-wheel at rest, is solemn in its silence ; the cloudy bosom, that has long hoarded its crystallised treasures, fast unburdens itself, and

" Silent and soft, and slow,
Descends the snow."

The streets are not wholly deserted. Here are the protectors and the disturbers of the peace ; the few drunkards who reel home, singing for their own amusement, and who are arrested here and there by the imaginary sight of some gay sprite dancing on the

snow-flakes as they fall before their path. The rioting youths whose evenings are spent with spirits, in the cup and in the polluted air, arm-in-arm, march hurriedly along; while women, both fair-decked and ill-clad; silently shrink from contact with the falling snow that sadly reminds them of the purity once theirs, but now for ever gone. The flakes fall gently on them, as if tenderly seeking to woo them from their lives of mutiny 'gainst their Creator and his providence. Cabs dash by, the muffled, drivers ejaculating, in short syllables, their opinions as to the weather, answering each other indistinctly enough through their woollen comforters. The passengers have come from a private party in yonder brilliantly-lighted hotel. Numbers of cabmen are waiting outside in the snow for a fare. Music inside, bustling horse-driving outside; the poor cabmen, shivering in the cold, half-frozen, hoping that the festivities may speedily close.

"The weather's rather sharp this morning, my friend," observes a gentlemanly-looking, middle-aged, well spoken man, to a naged cabman.

"Ay, sir; I'm almost froze to death, and I haven't a penny to get a cup of coffee with."

"Well, here, father, is a penny for a cup of coffee," and the friendly hand slips the coin between the cold fingers.

"Ah, sir, glad to see you again," cheerfully remarks another aged cabman, as he heartily grasps the hand of the visitor; "I haven't forgotten a little conversation we had when the cholera was about; you read a text out of the Bible, sir, which I tried to shake off, so as not to think about it; but it followed me wherever I went, and often when I was on my cab it would come into my mind, and what you said about it, too. The text was 'Set thy house in order,' &c., and it's made me a different man, sir. It made me feel something like this, 'How is it so many just round about where I live, even my next-door neighbours, have been taken away so suddenly by death, and I am spared.' I pray now, sir, that I may be kept by the power of God even unto death."

On trudges the missionary. Here is Farringdon Street—a dreary melancholy-looking deserted thoroughfare; old Fleet prison gateway (now being pulled down at this moment) frowning moodily upon you. Here, too, is the cab-rank. Six cabs, but no "cabby" in either of them. At the end of the rank is a fire-escape, and the six cabmen are seated upon it. The missionary, whose greatest chance of success

depends on his judicious appropriation of what he sees to illustrate what he has to say, at once converses with the men, drawing a vivid and by no means exaggerated analogy between the fire-escape and the escape from that danger which threatens both body and soul. In a few minutes a little group is formed, including two policemen, who were going their rounds, and the missionary, with solemnity and brotherly earnestness, impresses upon them the importance of an application to the Saviour of sinners, by whom alone safety was obtained from everlasting woe; and some seemed impressed. One cabman remarked, "I never saw religion so clear before; the illustration is very true; and I feel there is no time to lose—I trust I shall think more about another world than I have yet done."

After a weary round of visits, four o'clock is nigh. The missionary leaves the cab in which he has been sitting, conversing with a driver on his hopes of future happiness. He reaches the Great Eastern Railway. He always aims to be fifteen minutes with the men before the arrival of the early mail train. No passenger is to be seen at this early hour. A death-like stillness pervades the station, and you begin seriously to doubt whether you are visiting a terminus at all. Everything wears a sombre aspect. The lamp flickers fitfully, as if it were disposed to adjourn its attendance upon the ghostly scene. The wind wails terribly. The heavy tread of the policeman, whose steps are monotonously slow, and cause you to creep shudderingly within yourself, is relieved now and then by the light cheerful steps of the labourer who, whistling clearly in the sharp air, hastens on to the scene of his morning toil. Now, there are one or two lights which put into the shade the dull flame that almost expired in lonely solitude. There are no cabmen yet. By-and-by, there is a sound heard faintly in the distance; then wheels rattle, stones crash, voices are discerned, salutes are exchanged, and a little company of men soon assembles. The missionary chats with them; the porters join the little band, and at this strange hour the Word of God is preached. No, not preached—but a few seasonable evangelical observations are made on some appropriate text of Scripture that bears on the eternal interests of man. The words are few; the sentences short; and in a few minutes the quiet scene is exchanged for one of bustle. The mail has arrived from the General Post Office. One of the railway officials may now be seen walking very

quickly down the platform. He has just received a telegraphic despatch announcing the number of passengers, and how many cabs are likely to be wanted. The number is not favourable this morning. Anxiety is visible in the countenances of the poor old cabmen. They are disappointed this time, for many of them are not wanted. A whistle is heard. The train comes in. Porters run hither and thither. All down the platform there is bustle and excitement, which appears more intense because more observed at night than in the daytime. Horses, as well as men, seem to take the cue, and understand the meaning of the change. Within a short time silence again reigns, and the station assumes a similar aspect to its former solitariness.

There are nearly two thousand night cabmen. They are chiefly old men, who are less able to drive a cab in the busy streets during the day than they once were. Like the gossiping weaver's wife who could never beat her husband except in the morning, because that was the only time she was at home—the night cabman is only accessible to the Christian teacher during the hours when ordinary creation seeks repose. Many of these men are between sixty and eighty years of age. Some, like that soldier who, with his savage love of fighting, cared for nothing in heaven or hell, as long as he had his sword in hand or his pipe in mouth, are utterly regardless of the future, with its solemn issues. Witnessing nightly scenes revolting in their glaring wickedness, thrown among the intoxicating pleasures of sin, they are hardened and thoughtless; many of them have never entered a place of worship for years. Some have confessed that, but for the missionaries they would have utterly forgotten that they had a soul to be saved. They are very docile, remarkably glad to be taught the message of God's love. And, indeed, the two missionaries seem greatly attached to them. Being earnestly desirous for their best welfare, and remembering how close death must be to most of them, these messengers of peace yearn over their souls. In numbers of instances their efforts have been blessed. Poor old men, down whose furrowed cheeks the tears of penitence have flowed, have found in Christ the truest consolation for their wearied hearts. In the hour of life's eclipse—for death to the Christian is nought more—they have witnessed a good confession, and have given bright and glorious testimonies that they had been born again. "Yes sir,

said Mr. Salter, one of the missionaries referred to, "difficult as my task is, I enjoy it; it is where my Master has placed me, and I am in my right element." Yet, night work in all weathers, he confesses, has taken seven years' wear out of his constitution, but then he is seven years nearer Home!

Night public-houses, cab-stands, railway stations, coffee-houses, &c., are visited; and tracts are given away, the Word of God is explained and enforced, and conversations are entered into on the pressing topic of the soul's salvation. During the months of January and February, many public and private entertainments are held in London, and consequently they bring together many cabmen. Such places are visited. In the summer, tea-gardens and dancing-saloons attract multitudes of the giddy and the gay, and as the proprietors of these resorts, in many cases, have special licences to keep open till a later hour, large numbers of cabmen are to be found there waiting for fares. "I try," the missionary tells me, "in a kind and faithful manner to turn all their calamities to good account. Sometimes they will speak of tyranny and oppression, I would then remind them that in the service of Jesus Christ there is perfect freedom; that his yoke is easy and his burden light. Sometimes they will refer to their hard-earned money, and how difficult it is to lay by for a future day. I then try to enforce the duty of laying up treasure in heaven, &c. At other times, they will speak of the lamp agitation, and I then endeavour to show them that God's word is a lamp, which, by taking heed thereto, would prove a safe guide through this dark world to the place where no lamps are needed, because God is the light thereof." If the weather be wet, the cabmen will seek shelter and the missionary will "get up a talk" about the shelter in the great day of God's wrath. By these and other seductive arts, so necessary under the circumstances, the interest of the men is excited, and they will listen gladly to the gospel. Prior to the passing of the Early Closing Act, the cab trade in the Haymarket was exceedingly profitable, inasmuch as it was interwoven with the gross scenes of wickedness which made that neighbourhood notorious. Now, it is much less remunerative. At the same time, though vice has been largely suppressed, so far as outward appearances go, it would startle the undiscerning public were I to record how cleverly the law is evaded, and give from the missionary's own lips a description

of scenes about which the less one knows, the less sad one is likely to become. In visiting these haunts of impurity, where calmen make their calls to obtain refreshment, the missionary is seldom insulted. He has been threatened with violence, but not by the proprietor, the frail women, or the cabmen. The former, in nearly every instance, permits the missionary to distribute his tracts—even those which advocate temperance are not objected to—and to converse on religious subjects at the bar. On one occasion, a "swell" threatened to strike the missionary. A cabman overheard the menacing words, and coming up, showed a formidable pair of fists, close contact with which would be shunned by any one who had respect to his *physique*, and elevating them certain degrees into the air, he offered to show what remarkable ability he had in flooring an antagonist. "Touch that man, if you dare; he's my friend; hit him and I'll send yer sprawling on the pavement." The temptation fled, and the threatened assailant sneaked away, without even declining to show fight or offering to appoint a more favourable season for the exhibition of his prowess.

It would form a wonderful work if some one could gather together the cases of remarkable conversions seen after many days as the result of a godly mother's instructions. She who has been described as —

"A being, seeming sent from heaven among
Mankind, to show what heavenly wonders be,"

has often been the means under the Holy Spirit's direction and inspiration, of turning many from darkness unto light. Yet it is not always—perhaps it is not often—that she lives long enough to witness the result of her efforts. The only authentic portrait we have of Dante is a fac-simile drawing of Giotto's fresco portrait, once visible in the chapel of the palace of the Podestà, in Florence. For years it was covered with whitewash, and the painter's great masterpiece was hidden from the world until the whitewash was removed in 1840, and the long-hidden likeness was discovered. So may the untiring efforts of a mother's pious winning instruction and faithful counsel be seemingly lost for years, but "the day" shall declare what may now be hidden. The bread that has been cast upon the waters shall be seen after many days. This has been proved over and over again in the experience of the poor aged men of whom we

are writing. Listening to the counsels and entreaties of the missionary, some sentences have been dropped which they have remembered as having been spoken to them by their mothers, even fifty or sixty years ago. Struck with this fact, they have thought it over, and the words have so clung to them, wrestling with them with an earnestness that will not be denied, that they have cried, "Great God, I yield—

'Low at thy feet I fall
Subdued by sovereign grace.'

This is perhaps, one of the most distinctive results of the work of the missionaries: they have brought to remembrance words spoken years ago, which God has blessed when those who uttered them are "mouldering in the dust." Blessed be God for godly mothers! They are emphatically soul-winners of the noblest, truest type.

In collating some of the spiritual results of the mission to night cabmen, a difficulty presents itself. Out of a mass of material that would fill about one hundred pages of this book with interesting information, one must necessarily give the preference to typical cases, and representative efforts. I will, therefore select a few such pictures out of the mass of undigested notes lying before me.

One cold damp night, a ball was being held in Hanover Square-rooms, outside of which were at least fifty cabs. The missionary entered into conversation with several cabmen who were grouped together, and offered a few remarks on the Psalmist's words, "But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me," impressing on each man the thought that God cared for the old and grey-haired, the poor and the distressed. Several of the listeners shed tears copiously, and begged that the speaker would tell them where that beautiful verse was, that they might find it out, and think about it when they got home. The scene altogether was most affecting, and several men who were deeply impressed, followed the missionary, just as sea-birds follow a vessel, if mayhap a few crumbs may fall for their benefit. On another occasion, at the same place, while the rain was pouring heavily, the missionary was invited into one of the cabs, and as many as could squeeze in and stand outside the doors did so, and in this novel way the third chapter of St. John was read, and its lessons enforced. Mr. Salter, the missionary, speaks as one who has believed, and experienced all that he relates. The great power

of Dante, Macaulay tells us, arose from the fact that he seemed to be an eye-witness and ear-witness of what he relates; "his own hands had grasped the shaggy side of Lucifer," "his own brow had been marked by the purifying angel." The missionary's success is, under God, to be attributed to the same cause—the glow of enthusiasm, the fervour of sincerity, the sympathy of tenderness, the authority of a heaven-sent teacher, flash in the eye and sparkle in the message. When he speaks to the aged men of Christ, he convinces them that he was no mean prophet. The world, it has been said, has had many monarchs, but only one Michael Angelo: men have witnessed many noble deeds of self-sacrificing love, but "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." This story of the cross is most effective in changing the lives of these men, who are more arrested by the Saviour's death than by the marvel of His birth:—

"Is it not strange, the darkest hour
That ever dawned on sinful earth
Should touch the heart with softer power,
For comfort, than an angel's mirth:
That to the cross the mourner's eye should turn
Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn?"

The missionary holds two meetings each week for cabmen—one on Sunday and the other on Friday evening. One meeting is held within quarter of an hour's walk of the great building hallowed to Englishmen and to thousands by its many sacred associations. In this room, the average attendance is 35, and good results have followed the exhortations made to these aged men. Under the arch at Waterloo Railway Station, from forty to fifty men will assemble to listen to the missionary's message. Of these meetings, he gives me some telling descriptions.

"The time to hold the meeting," he says, "must be arranged by the arrival of the trains, and the hour of nine is best, as there are no trains expected till ten minutes to ten. Then I enter the place, which has been fitted up for the purpose of gaining refreshments expressly for the cabmen. Numbers of them may be seen conversing together, sometimes rather loudly; but when I open my Bible everything is laid aside and they all sit very attentively till the meeting is closed. I generally select a narrative, and endeavour to bring out some of the great lessons to be derived, giving them the opportunity of asking any question on the subject afterwards. Here I often find a few Christian cabmen who cheer me in my work, and I very seldom leave without receiving many expressions of

thankfulness from the men ; and I believe many have often been deeply impressed on the necessity of personal religion. A short time since, I addressed them from the narrative of the Shunammite woman, who, speaking of the death of her little child, could say amidst her grief, ' It is well.' I made some remarks on the death of little children, and remarked, ' Perhaps some of you, like myself, have had to part with your children. Let me ask you, how did you feel ? could you from your heart say, ' It is well, God has done right ' ? This touched a very tender chord, for I saw several of them wiping their eyes," &c.

Three cabmen, it appears, were arrested by the message, and, says the missionary, " In my visitations, I often meet with cabmen who refer this meeting." The following extract from one of the missionary's reports will be worth reading :—

" One wonderful thing that the Early Closing Act has accomplished is to clear the streets of those hundreds of night-begging impostors and outcasts who were to be found huddled together under the porches of theatres, on the stone seats of the different bridges, around the National Gallery, and in fact in every available spot. These people used to push their way into the night houses, and tell their pretended tale of woe to half-drunk swells, who would sometimes give them sixpence or a shilling, which they would spend in gin. When I have warned them of their sinful course of life, they would clasp their hands, turn up their eyes, and appeal to God with the greatest lie imaginable on their lips. I know of no class of people that I so disliked to meet as these, for as soon as I began to speak to them they would begin to beg, although half drunk. Some of them had been in good circumstances, and had had a tolerable education, but, like the prodigal, had spent their substance in riotous living, and were now feeding on the husks. Many of them lounge about the parks in the daytime, or where they can find a place of seclusion ; and yet even visits to this abandoned class of persons have not been in vain, as the following case will show :—

" Two years ago there was to be seen at the Haymarket by night a person of dark complexion, a native of South America, who was known among the outcast and beggars by the name of Yankee. I had several conversations with him, and found him to be an educated man, and that his father had been possessed of large property in America, which fell to him, and which he disposed of and came to England. Here he fell into bad company, and soon ran through his money, till by degrees he became utterly destitute of home, food, and almost clothing, and no man gave unto him. In this condition I found him one night, and gave him a cup of coffee, and ever after I used to speak to him of that Saviour who came to seek and to save the lost, which appeared to make a deep impression on his mind. All at once I lost sight of poor Yankee, till I went to the May Meetings last May, and found a copy of the ' Revival ' paper on one of the seats, which contained an account of my old friend. It stated that as he was walking up Whitechapel on one occasion, he wandered into a meeting, which led to his conversion to Almighty God, and being an educated man, he was afterwards ordained to go as a missionary abroad, and while giving an account of his

conversion he related the kindness he received from the missionary, in connexion with other things, as having led to his decision for the Lord Jesus Christ. May not one sincerely hope that there are other instances in which 'good' has been done among this class of persons, although it may never be known till the great day of reckoning?"

Here is another noticeable case :—

"On another occasion a pugilist gave me his address, told me that when a little boy, his mother used to teach him his prayers, some of which he repeated to me, and said he often wept when he thought of his sinful course of life. He told me he had got the best wife in the world, but he treated her like a brute. I talked to the poor fellow till he wept like a child, and he took hold of my arm and said, 'You shall go home with me to-night.' I begged to be excused, as it was now three o'clock in the morning. However, there was no alternative so off I went with him, arm-and-arm. He called his poor wife up, although I wished him not to do so, but so far from being angry when she saw that my object was to try and reform her husband, she thanked me with tears in her eyes. He promised by God's help to seek to lead a new life, and give his heart to God. As I had a Testament in my pocket I gave them it, and we knelt down and prayed for God's blessing on our meeting. I went home musing on the event which had occurred, and could not help feeling that the Lord had directed my steps back with the man. I have called since, and find that by trade he is a sawyer. He is now working at his trade, is a teetotalter, and in a hopeful state of mind."

The conversions do not seem to be frequently immediate. The men's consciences are arrested; their attention is awakened; they go home and meditate, or think over what they have heard while seated on their cabs; and so are led to pray, and to confide in the Hearer and Answerer of Prayer. The tracts are thankfully received and well pondered over; homely truths, appropriately uttered, and suitably applied, have a magic force with them; while what some are ever regarding as the common-places of evangelical teaching, strike their minds with freshness and beauty. Their profession of Christianity is charming in its naked simplicity. They do not attain to great knowledge; and beginning only at the close of life's history to experimentally to work out the first formulas of the divine life, they do not gain those deeper and richer acquaintances with truth which characterise believers who have been long taught of God. Yet they live with bright, cheerful prospects; and die with the calm, restful assurance of eternal enjoyment of heavenly blessings. Here they are soldiers, training in God's military academies: there they cease the conflict and enjoy blissful repose. Or, using a figure of old Master

Brooks, they see their loved Lord, "in all his heavenly bravery, and in all his divine embroidery and bespangled glory." "For now," saith the apostle, "we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

CHAPTER XII.

AMONG THE THIEVES AND TRAMPS OF ST. GILES.

THE air is still. Breezes had taken their summer holiday, as if piqued with frolicking around the thousands of angles and corners of this irregular-shaped London, and meeting only the pestilential odours which abound in courts and alleys, in yards and dens. This murky, close atmosphere, so allied to fevers, cholera, and distempers, brings out the pallid-faced people from the garrets and bedrooms, where year after year they strive to breathe sufficient oxygen to maintain life, into the streets and doorsteps of all crowded districts. Seven Dials was a scene of many-typed life. Here were the young and gay, frivolous and sad, careworn and careless, dark and fair, ill-clothed and well-clothed, mothers with babies nestling asleep, worn out with crying; diminutive-looking, squalid, unkept children—the boys noisy and roguish, the girls stupidly indifferent, with their heads propped up by their mother's lap or by the doorpost. There were Irish and there were Scotch, but the "chatter," mainly from the teeth outwards, seemed too outlandish for either. Here there was a knot of rough-haired, unbonneted women, with short dresses, flash birds-eye handkerchiefs thrown over their shoulders for shawls, and hobnail boots; there, a number of vagrants slouching, dirty, smoking, as if waiting for strong incitement to lead them to activity. On one side of the pavement groups of idlers were gazing on the idlers on the opposite side. Ill-dressed, battered-face girls were stalking up and down, grinning here and there, while lads were joking, laughing, swearing, and whistling. Black eyes, red noses, flattened faces, thick lips, cut lips, scarlet, blotchy heads, entangled hair, twisted and curled by the exigencies of life,—all were here mixing with a crowd of men and women whose aggregated lives represent a mass of sin, wretchedness, and want, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard.

Not far from the centre of Seven Dials may be seen a pebble-paved court, surrounded with stables, cowhouses, &c. Up this court there is a common lodging-house for thieves, tramps, beggars, crossing-sweepers, putterers, song-singers, herb and other vendors. Behind the house there is a low barn-like building, on the floor of which is a kitchen. Yes, a thieves' kitchen—a dirty, speckled, ill-ventilated, ill-lighted, oblong large room, full of odours arising from dust, tobacco, and smoke, closeness, cooked potatoes, steaming tea, and stale-smelling beer. A room with plastered walls, here and there showing signs of having been injured in some unknown way or other, with no traces of whitewash, but every trace of vermin and filth. There was one long bench stretching across the room, and another against the old-fashioned farm-house fire that was blazing so merrily. There were over a dozen men in the room. One old man was huddled up against the fire, "all of a heap," drunk, but all the others were sober. There was a rough-looking navvy, who would have made three of the writer—a man whom one would fly from in a dark lonely thoroughfare. He was quietly sipping a basin of tea. Several were busily engaged in scraping new potatoes, which they did most economically, and without injuring, as all amateurs would probably do, the external appearance of that esculent root. Some had a pot of ale and a pipe, others looked as if they would like to have the same. Nearly all had evidently passed the middle age of life, and some seemed not far from that bourne from whence no traveller returns.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said our friend Mr. P——, who preaches at various times with others in this den. "How are you all? Haven't seen you a long while. Where have you been?" heartily grasping the hand of one or two men, who were greatly gratified at our visit. The big man in the smock looked sullenly on and sipped his tea. The drunken old man at the fireside pricked up his ears, tried to show signs of mental equilibrium, and of course utterly failed. He professed great respect for "Misther P——," and claimed a long acquaintance with that "gentleman." While the others were invited to an entertainment at the Mission Hall, in Moor Street, the wretched old fellow was assured that the honour of his company would be unsolicited for that evening. Poor man, he confessed he had had a drop too much, but treated it as a failure of

ordinary occurrence, and one to which no great shame was attached. Ultimately we parted with these "gentlemen," with the assurance that several would pop in and occupy a seat at Mr. McCree's Mission Hall that evening.

"Misther P——," said a voice behind us as we were turning down the passage leading through the stables to another lodging-house. It proceeded from a good Christian man who had lived for many years in this place, and who was now a member of Mr. Brock's church in Bloomsbury. "I have been thinking," said this good man, (who by-the-by obtains his precarious living by selling herbs which he has to gather in the country) "and asking myself, 'What is the greatest power on earth?' The result of that day's contemplations was that the name of Jesus was 'the greatest power in the world, for,' added the good old man, 'at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,' &c. &c., which he went on in his simple thoughtful way to explain. Why does this man still live in such a den? Because it is cheap and he is poor. Fourpence a night for sleeping and cooking accommodation is as much as a poor herb-seller can afford. Besides, he is of great service for his Master there. When a tramp or thief is ill, he attends his bedside and prays for him. He reports needy cases to Mr. McCree, and acts as a trustworthy authority in the den."

The second kitchen we entered seemed to be more respectable, although we are assured that more dishonest persons live there than in the first place we visited. The men were much younger, and were probably nearly all thieves. There were two lads of—say fifteen years of age most respectably dressed: no doubt they had fallen into disgrace by robbing their employers, or running away from home. They get their livelihood in the best, or rather in the worst, way they can. Most of the men who live in these lodging-houses were at one time in respectable positions in society, but having fallen from the paths of rectitude they have been brought to this degraded life. A very old man, with a most genial face, had been a French senator, knew some nine or ten languages, and had been banished in the time of the French Revolution. A few years ago he returned to his native country, but during the trial of Felice Orsini for the attempted assassination of the Emperor, he was apprehended on suspicion, and as a refugee had his goods confiscated and was banished. Coming to England, he, an old man, without a penny in his

pocket—what could he do but resort to the cheapest lodging-house? He ekes out existence by selling nightingales, which he catches by means of a most ingenious trap. This trap, with its springs, is a marvel in its way: and the poor old man showed it to us with feelings of pride.

It may be added that altogether there are about two hundred of these lodging-houses in London, some of which are low haunts for lascivious boys and girls of from twelve to twenty years of age. In the majority of them missionaries are allowed to enter, and those who conduct themselves in a judicious manner are always listened to with great attention. There are eleven lodging-houses under visitation by the "Bloomsbury Mission," about six of which are under tolerably decent management. We were most respectfully treated on the occasion of our visit, and it is the testimony of all Mr. M'Cree's helpers that they are never insulted. Services are conducted in the kitchens at various times, and the word of God has been blessed to many out of these migratory tribes.

The history of Mr. M'Cree's mission may soon be told. In 1848, the Rev. W. Brock came to London, followed in a few days by Mr. M'Cree; they were both intimate friends, and were destined to see honourable and active but different work. Mr. Brock preached in Bloomsbury Chapel, and Mr. M'Cree sauntered alone to St. Giles. Arriving at a barber's shop in Shott's Gardens, he commenced talking of the Lord Jesus Christ to those present. That was the origin of the mission.

In the course of time a Temperance Hall, situated in King Street, was obtained, and on Tuesday evening Mr. Brock had the satisfaction of opening the hall by preaching a sermon to a congregation consisting of twenty-seven persons, from the words, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance," &c. On the first Sabbath evening, Mr. M'Cree preached to eighty persons from the words, "The common salvation." This was seventeen years ago.

Here is a contrast. There are now two Mission halls. That in King Street will hold say three hundred persons, but the larger hall in Moor Street, where Mr. M'Cree constantly preaches, accommodates five hundred. Both are frequently filled to overflowing, and it has often been the case that numbers have not been able to gain admittance. The hall in Moor Street was originally a Swiss

chapel; it has galleries all round, a deep broad pit, and a high platform. There are moveable seats, and the general appearance of the place is, if not altogether cheerful, comparatively comfortable. Two separate services are held in each building for Sunday scholars. There are two Temperance Societies connected with the mission, two Bands of Hope, two penny banks, three Mothers' Meetings, a singing class—and the choir is an interesting feature—a sewing class, a Bible and book society, by which the poor can, for a weekly trifle, obtain a good Bible or a religious book; two lending libraries—(the books we found to be well-thumbed, and the paper covers black); Bible classes for young men and women, prayer meetings, open-air preaching, cottage prayer meetings, Sabbath afternoon visitation of the poor, and teaching in lodging-houses, a society for the relief of the sick, religious services in the week evenings, popular entertainments, consisting of singing, lectures, magic lanterns, &c. Besides all these, there are the usual enquirers' meetings, conducted by Mr. McCree and others, and the services on Sunday and Wednesday evenings in King Street Mission Hall, at which Mr. G. Hatton preaches. In this hall early prayer meetings have been held in the summer months, and two prayer meetings a week have taken place in the homes of the poor, at which many who would not think of attending the hall services have heard the gospel tidings. Scarcely any of these meetings have been unattended with some case of blessing. This paragraph summarises an amount of work which could not be done by one person. There are many engaged in it, and one or two leading spirits energise the whole. There are separate organizations which work as far as possible in distinct grooves. And when the helpers meet together, as they were good enough to do for the assistance of the writer in this his task, they are all surprised at the varied operations and successes of their work. The popular entertainments are specially useful in keeping the poor from the gin shops, and in bringing them under superior attractions. Indeed, many who attend one evening out of curiosity, or for warmth or cheerfulness, come again, and so are brought within the sound of the gospel.

Mr. McCree has been designated the Bishop of St. Giles; and if there be any honour in the title, no man more deserves to wear it. In every way he has caught the old apostolic spirit, and it is gratifying

to observe how thoroughly he has learned to understand the wants and to sympathize with the difficulties of the nomad wandering tribes of English heathens to whom he ministers the truth of Jesus. Next to the perpetual presence of Christ a greater blessing could scarcely be desired by a church than to have connected with it, for essentially aggressive work in outlying poor populations, a man of Mr. M'Cree's mental calibre and gifts. One excellent feature of his character is decision—a characteristic firmness which demands the respect of working men. His name has never been mentioned without the prefix "Mr.," even by those who are accredited with but little attention to even ordinary distinctions. But this would not be the case unless a spirit of gentlemanly sympathy were evinced to the most degraded. Kindness goes nearer to the heart than charity, and a courteous behaviour seldom loses its reward. The poor people of St. Giles are acquainted with Mr. M'Cree's genuine and unaffected nature and transparent motives, and honest purposes command respect everywhere but in the most blasted of natures; withered by self-love or self-importance. The reader need not be surprised to learn that even thieves and ticket-of-leave men can trust Mr. M'Cree. We give an exact copy of a license which has to be presented at the police-office once a month, supplying, of course, a fictitious name, and omitting some of the circumstances. The certificate, which is of parchment, has been tolerably well-thumbed, and looks as if it had been carried about in the convicts' pockets. Some of the reformed convicts living in the neighbourhood entrust Mr. M'Cree with their certificate until the day arrives when they have to show it before the proper authorities.

Order of License to a Convict, made under the statutes 16 and 17 Vic., chap. 99, sect. 9. and 20 and 21 Vic., chap. 3.

Whitehall.

—day of—, 1863.

HER MAJESTY is graciously pleased to grant to JOSEPH SPROUTS, in the Portland Prison, who was convicted of stealing from the person, at the Sessions of the Peace held at Clerkenwell, for the County of Middlesex, on the day of—, and was thence sentenced to Penal Servitude for the Term of Seven Years, Her Royal License to be at large in the United Kingdom, from the day of his liberation under this Order during the remaining portion of his said Term of Penal Servitude, until it shall please HER MAJESTY sooner to

AMONG THE THIEVES AND TRAMPS OF ST. GILES.

revoke or alter such License. And HER MAJESTY hereby orders that the said JOSEPH SPROUTS be set at liberty within Thirty days from the date of this Order.

Given under my hand and seal,

True Copy :

(Signed) G. GREY.

J. M. GAMBIER.

Director of Convict Prisons.

The following is the Certificate for well-conducted men discharged on License :—

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Joseph Sprouts. | | | |
| Born at London. | | | |
| Aged 44. | | | |
| Period passed | In Separate or other Confinement | Years | Months. |
| | On Public Works | do. | do. |
| Original Trade or Occupation, Costermonger. | | | |
| Prison Trade. Labourer. | | | |
| These are to certify that his conduct under Penal Servitude has been as follows :— | | | |
| { On Public Works, Exemplary. } | | | |
| { In other Confinement, Very good. } | | | |
| Given without erasure. | | | |
| Date _____ | | A. H. SUTHERLAND, | |
| | | Acting Governor of Broadmoor Prison. | |

On the back of the first document, there is a description of the person, and a notice of the conditions under which it has been granted. These need not be reproduced.

The Mission Hall in Moor Street on a Sabbath evening presents a striking appearance. It is always well filled. The congregation is indicative of the neighbourhood. There are clean and tidy people, and there are a few to whom soap and water seem needless luxuries. Some are decked out in their best, some in their only apparel. A few ill-conditioned, half-starved, poorly-clad persons might have been discerned in some of the back seats, but nearly all were better dressed and more respectable in appearance than one would have expected. Mr. Lewis's smaller congregation in Spitalfields had a much more deplorable appearance. The singing was earnest, sometimes passionate, but excellent. The prayer was uttered with great fervency, and was responded to in subdued tones of earnest feeling. The sermon was from the solemn words, "A form of godliness."

What most astonished us was the large number who remained to the after-sermon prayer-meeting. At least one-half the congregation were present, and the meeting was of a most interesting and soul-stirring character. No honest Christian heart could refuse to thank God for granting so much gospel light, love and holy joy, in so dark and benighted a district. As soon as this meeting was over, Mr. M'Cree visited a Servants' Home to conduct family worship, a service which is of an unusually interesting character.

If the reader anticipates a glowing description of results, and a table of statistics, he will be grievously disappointed. Statistics such as these published by certain revivalistic papers are invariably dangerously delusive. They give no adequate idea of God's work, nor are they to be depended on for accuracy. Conversions may be numbered, and remarkable cases may be described. So far so good; but, as daily experience teaches us, the operations of the Holy Spirit are often as silent as they are efficacious. "After many days" the seed shows us how deeply it has taken root; but were we to always obtain direct results from evangelistic efforts, there would be but little living by faith, and much more walking by sight. This is more especially the case in those missions to the wandering tribes of London we have described in this book. These tramps come and go, and are perhaps heard of no more. The word of counsel, the message of salvation, the earnest, cheerful and loving entreaty do not utterly fail: "For my word shall not return unto me void, but shall accomplish" the very purpose for which almighty love designed it. Fruit after many days—let us expect it, those who preach with their pen, those who show forth the riches of grace with matchless eloquence, and those also who stammer forth His praise. Let it not be supposed, however, that Mr. M'Cree's mission is without good, lasting results. Few men have been more blessed of God. Few have received greater comforts from the results of past labours, and more encouragement to renewed efforts.

Mr. M'Cree is a man of strong temperance principles, who winks not at those peccadilloes which unfortunately many Christian men are apt to look upon as harmless. With him total abstinence is a great power, and he treats it as a great means to a nobler end. And facts attest the immense advantage of the adoption of this principle among those who are tempted to indulge in strong drink. We heard,

at the entertainment given by Mr. M'Cree, from the cheerful voices of nearly five hundred persons, the lustily-sung chorus—

“For I'm happy all the day since I threw the glass away,
And I'll never take to drinking any more;
With water from the fountain flashing in each sunny ray,
I have health and I have happiness in store.”

And the appearance of many who entered into the noiseful song, as compared with the rags and tatters of their former lives, was a strong argument for Mr. M'Cree's favourite principle of thorough abstinence. The degradation which drunkenness entails on its victims, the fearful hardening tendency of this vice, which brings in its train the direst evils, and the amount of injury which it encourages, prove how elephantine is this curse. Mr. M'Cree was once visited by a *girl* who had been in prison ten times for drunkenness. We, ourselves, met with a woman who had been in prison between sixty and seventy times, had spent the best part of her life in gaol for indulging in this vice, a woman whose life in confinement was so exemplary that every one commiserated her, and yet whenever we take up a certain provincial newspaper, the heading, “*Ann Gardner again*,” in italics, is nearly always there. For such inveterate cases confinement in an asylum, as the *Freeman* only recently proposed, would be an act of mercy. But even this would not touch the core of the evil, for it glares upon us everywhere and defies suppression.

We enquired whether Mr. M'Cree had ever been insulted in any way whilst engaged in his mission. The answer we give you in his own words:—“I never knew what it was to be openly insulted. On a certain occasion I was passing along Seven Dials, when a young thief thought it would be a capital joke to pick my pocket. He walked behind me, and was just going to make the attempt, when a woman who lived with a swell mobster saw him, and immediately came behind me, gave him a tremendous smack in the face which sent him reeling against the wall, as a punishment for his impertinence.” Mr. M'Cree gave us another instance, which also we give, so far as we can, in his own words:—“I was preaching in the open air in Seven Dials one Sabbath morning, at a time when the streets were up for the laying of new sewage-pipes, and a young man, a stranger in the neighbourhood, was passing by, and stopped to hear me preach. A blacksmith saw him stoop down and pick up half a

brick, and he then lingered towards the spot where I was addressing the people. The blacksmith observed the young man's motions, and quietly followed him and kept his eye on the position of the half brick. The man continued to listen to my sermon, and when I had closed he very quietly opened his hand and dropped the missile on the ground. The blacksmith, in relating the circumstance to me, assured me that he was quite prepared to seize the young fellow's hand if he made any attempt to throw the brick." Another case. Mr. M'Cree, visited the death-bed of the celebrated prize-fighter, "Champion of all England," Harry Broome. As he lay on his bed, he told Mr. M'Cree that he heard him preaching one day in Seven Dials, and he saw there some men who were disposed to make a disturbance. He went up to the men and said "I won't allow you to insult that gentleman." "Oh," answered they, scornfully, "who are you? You are only Harry Broome." "Harry Broome or not, I'm not going to let you disturb that gentleman, and if you do I'll"—not show you the force of my physical eloquence—"have you locked up in Bow Street." Thus God protects his servants. Perfect order is generally kept in Seven Dials when Mr. M'Cree is preaching.

CHAPTER XIII.

AMONG THE THIEVES AND TRAMPS OF ST. GILES.

OXFORD Street—one of the main arteries of London fashionable life—occupies a prominent position in the map of Vanity Fair. Walking through it in the daylight, and especially through that portion denominated *New Oxford Street*, we are in the midst of fashion, foppery, frizzed hair, chignons, long-trailing skirts, the richest attire, the superbest carriages, the gayest life; we are surrounded by the most pretentious appearances, and the most assuming airs, for here and there we have aspiring noses, scornful looks, affected movements, curious inspections of others' millinery vagaries, dressmaking whims, and butterfly fancies, created for the hour to be disarranged the next——

Only half-a-dozen steps, and what a violent contrast! We have left high life behind, and are in the arena of the lowest low life. We are in the Rookeries—once, when its companion alleys were in existence, the terror of the honest folk, the perpetual bugbear of the

street-protectors, the resort of law-depredators and of criminals of deepest dye—a true City of Refuge, with, not many years ago, iron gates at its entrance, beyond which no man who respected either the crown of his head or the sole of his foot dare enter, for the one would certainly be broken and the other tripped, unless a full deliverance were speedily rendered of all marketable and convertible things to appease the lawless cries of these criminal horse-leeches. The Rookery is a remnant of past days, when the followers of Jack Sheppard, on their way to some bold enterprise, would ride through with acclamations, and quench their thirst at the tap where their sad earnings were mostly spent. But it is only a remnant, smaller doubtless than a certain class would wish it to be, yet significant of what its past history must have been. I wonder what those fashionably-dressed waiters upon the upper class customers in Oxford Street must think—surely think they must!—of the contrast between high life and low life which daily meets their view. From the front rooms of their well-arranged, gorgeous marts, may be seen all the apishness of ultra-refinement and overstrained good breeding; from the back, all the filth and degradation which humanity in a civilised nation can well have. Let us attempt to draw the picture. We are in an irregular, narrow, street of old, rickety, smudged, parti-coloured, dingy hovels. Out of the windows of the first and second storeys, short poles, attached by strings on either side to the wall, and serving for clothes' props and lines, are protruding like so many masts—presenting the appearance of a gala-day in King Poverty's dominions—with smoky-white, tattered and torn rags that have seemingly done duty for aye, suspended as flags. In the road—walk it carefully—we see filth of kinds which delicacy forbids to describe—vegetable refuse, manure, sludge and soap-suds. On the pavement, sitting, sprawling, standing, are women and children of careless attire, with clattering tongues, discoloured faces, and many-tinted, strong-smelling clothes; the women with broad, hard, disfigured, flattened, expressionless faces, and the children growing not only in vice and in devotion to uncleanness, but also in brutality of features and of actions. Leave nervousness of Oxford-street, and summon up courage to pierce your way through this unearthly maze. You are stared at, and consigned where—God be thanked!—his mercy will never permit us to go. Some of the gentler sex, with arms a-kimbo, growl deeply like

ventriloquists. By some of the sterner manhood we, gentle reader, inoffensive and harmless as we are, are looked upon with suspicion as if we were a policeman in disguise—to us an uncomfortable suspicion, which might have been extremely unpleasant but for the protecting daylight. Up one court, down another, looking in this corner, then in that—“Come Jem, they’re——cracks,” or, according to interpretation, sanitary inspectors or swells. Still onward—through mud and stench, up a stone-paved alley, leading to whitewashed overcrowded dens, outside of which were half-nude squalid children rolling over each other; noting here a lodging-house at *three-pence a night*; and there a beer-house, patronised by the best quality—not of liquors, but of residents. Onward still, up another alley, whose houses seem as though they would fall with a shake, with shutters closed, windows broken; then into the street again, to meet another regiment of female squatters. Look below, there are dark, damp kitchens, filled with human beings, of all degrees of destitution and wretchedness—of one prevailing type of ignorance. Look on the ground floor, and in the midst of a worthless miscellany of maimed and mutilated furniture—beds, tables, seats, cracked mugs and jugs, headless, armless, shapeless ornaments, broken all in various ways—may be seen fowls and dogs, boys and girls, mothers and infants. Above, first and second floor, heads are peering out on the scene below. Everywhere you behold the seeds of disease and of premature decay, the offspring of sinful neglect, of vice and drunkenness.

The inhabitants of this street and its arterial branches are mostly low Irish, costermongers, and vagabonds. The costers sort their fruit—some of the peaches, apples, &c., are sold in the most respectable parts of London—in the middle of the street, hence the refuse. It is impossible that they can have any sensible appreciation of the laws of cleanliness, and to those who understand their habits it is a mystery how sanitary inspectors can manage to keep the houses as clean as they are.

* * * * *

“Murder!”—still again, “Murder!”—yet again louder and louder, till the cry is echoed and re-echoed by lusty throats in the street—“Murder!” It is Sunday night; darkness has covered the light of heaven. There is a crowd—a noisy, excitable, vicious assemblage of the great unkempt, unwashed, irreligious residents of

the Rookeries. The noise proceeds from a bedroom in a most desolate-looking lodging-house. Opposite, in a room containing seven or eight beds, each accommodating two and three persons of both sexes, a sick-visitor tending to the wants of one Bridget, fallen ill, hears the oft-repeated shriek of "Murder!" He ventures down the creaking stairs, into the street, and enquires the cause of the distress. "Murther was being done," answered some dogged, ill-conditioned lookers-on. "Why don't you go and stop it? Will any gentleman go upstairs with me?" There was no response. "Give me a light, I will go myself." "No, don't, you'll be murdered." But he went, burst open the door, and ran upstairs. One man was brandishing a poker, and trying to force his way into the second floor bedroom, which had been bolted and secured by the women inside. The intruder was struck at with the poker, but the blow fell short. "Halloo, Tim, is that the way in which you salute your best friend?" The maddened man was staggered, sat down on the stairs, and wiped his bleeding forehead. "If the Lord Jesus Christ hadn't sent me here, Tim, there would have been murder done, and your soul would have been lost." At the mention of Christ's name, Tim made, as all true Irish Catholics do, blackguards as they may be, the sign of the cross. "Tim, my boy, don't go on so. What is the matter? Come home along with me, and let us talk it over." The visitor succeeded in getting him home, and apparently the man seemed quieted, and so our friend left him to fulfil his duties in the sick room.

Another cry of "Murther," and yet another. Tim has got back to the scene of his murderous exploits. The poker was being vapoured in the air again, and again Tim was persuaded to leave the house. With light in hand, upstairs went our friend, and found a man beating the door from the inside to get out to execute his designs upon his offending brother Tim. As he broke the door the bottom panels fell out. The visitor put in his candle. The infuriated Irishman fell back for a moment staggered, and so allowed the heroic intruder to creep into the room. "Dan, my boy, what are you doing? Jesus Christ has sent me here (here a mechanically-made sign of the cross by both man and woman) to stop you committing murder." The man was calmed, the poker was laid aside, and a lesson was patiently listened to in which the visitor, who was

believed at the time to be a "praste," enforced the necessity of brotherly love and forbearance, instancing Peter's asking the Great Master how many times he was to forgive his brother. The name of Peter acts as a charm in teaching the ignorant Irish Catholic, for if he does not understand *one* principle of religion, he knows St. Peter—the rock on which the church is built. And so—to make a long story short—the quarrel was put an end to, the probable consequences averted, and an abiding lesson inculcated.

And all was due to the heroism of one of Mr. M'Cree's most useful helpers—one of the most singular visitors it has been our good fortune to meet with in our wanderings. This Mr. S. G.———has, since his joining Mr. Brock's church at Bloomsbury Chapel, devoted his leisure time to visiting the sick, and the way in which this is done, and the methods he employs to win souls to the Blessed Christ of God can be best described by the apostle when he cynically retorts, "nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile" (2 Cor. xii. 16); or when he asserts the usefulness of any means—"that I might by all means save some." (1 Cor. ix. 22.) As an instance of this craftiness in engaging the attention, I will give two anecdotes.

One Sabbath evening our friend was distributing tracts on Seven Dials, when he saw a dirty-looking fellow with a pipe in his mouth, and a dog under his arm, and having his boots blacked. The following conversation ensued:—

"Good morning, my friend, will you have a little book?"

The stranger stretching out his hand, with a look of surprise cried out, "Halloo!"

From some reason or other—known to no one, not even himself—our friend cried out "Halloo!" also.

"How long have you been up to this dodge?" asked the dirty-looking man with a dog under his arm.

"About three years," was the answer of the man with the tracts in his hand.

"Does it pay?" shrewdly asked the inquisitive stranger.

"Very well indeed."

"Oh yes—anything for an honest living; you may as well do this as anything else."

"Well, rather," replied G——, "for Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."

"You said it paid well?"

"First rate."

"If it is a fair question to put, what do they stand?"

"A crown."

"A crown!" (drawing up his breath with surprise). "Not so bad either," thinking that a crown a-day was meant.

"The pay safe, of course?"

"Certainly."

"Does it want any introduction to get into it?"

"No; simply apply at the fountain head, and if you suit you'll be taken on directly."

"I suppose it's pretty lasting?"

"For life, if you are faithful."

"Then there's no fear of your getting the sack?"

"No. If you are ever so old, they'll never turn you off. Even then, there's a house to live in and a new coat."

"Well, it's a first-rate affair, and I should like to have a turn at it myself. Do you think I should suit?"

"Yes. I never knew a case yet where one sincerely applied that was refused. But you had better apply to the fountain head."

"Oh, of course I should go to the gov'nor. Where do you apply?"

"To KING JESUS." The spell was broken, and the man took his pipe out of his mouth, and gave a significant whistle. Mr. G—— whistled too, and after a pause said, "Look here, my boy. I've served the devil for thirty-six years, and was faithful to him. Now I am serving Jesus Christ. He gives me good wages, has prospered me, has promised me a crown of glory, a robe of righteousness, and a mansion to dwell in. If that isn't worth working for, I don't know what is. Good bye."

* * * * *

A steamboat was sailing from Margate to London. It was much crowded with passengers, who had spent the day in jollification. There was a party of fast young men, sitting at the forepart of the vessel, singing all the popular songs of the day, and proclaiming amidst the great approval of those by whom they were surrounded, the meanness of their origin and habits—they were "jolly dogs."

As soon as a slight interval ensued, some faithful Christian man walked up to the said jolly dogs and began to speak to them of the

attractiveness of the love of the God-man. He was immediately hounded and hooted. Determined not to be put down, he raised himself on a barrel and began to speak more earnestly. He was thereupon received with redoubled scorn, and another comic song was called for.

G ——— who had quietly watched these proceedings, here stepped up, and asked them whether they would like a good recitation. There were cries of "Hear, hear, hear," and "He's a jolly good fellow," "He's one of us." He thereupon gave them a simple ditty, known as "The Lady and the Pie," which thus commenced —

"To the hall of the feast came the sinful and fair,

For she heard in the city that Jesus was there :

She marked not the splendour that blazon'd the board,

* But quietly knelt at the feet of her Lord."

The countenances of the wild young fellows dropped, and they began to look upon him with suspicion. At the conclusion of the verses, one of them said, "Oh, he's another religious hypocrite!" and another, "Button up your pockets," while another added assuringly, "That's what I always do." "They're a set of villains and clergyman is a thief," for clergyman is the incarnation of every evil with those vapid minds who despise God and religious men." Our friend tried to reason with the rabble crew, as to the decency of their conduct toward the good man who had endeavoured to benefit them by his good advice. He said it was a good thing for some of them who had stigmatized God's people as villains that his Gentile jacket had been taken off him, or he would have thrashed them. For our friend has known what it is to fight fairly and openly in his unregenerate days. Having called them an ignorant lot, the rabble of the world, and by other uncomplimentary metaphors, he commenced to unlock the riddle, by saying that he had caught them like the apostle did others in his days with guile, and thus he preached Jesus the Saviour of the rabble, even for two hours, no signs of weariness and no interruption being shown. They were cooled down, and at the end of the voyage many shook him by the hand, begged his pardon, and assured him that they would never forget the circumstance to the end of their lives.

A popular impression seems to prevail among those who are somewhat fascinated by the symbolism of Roman Catholicism, or who at least hope better than some of us can for the influence of a vivid

externalism, that hidden under much that is superstitious there is a layer of granitic truth which forms a sure basis on which to erect a purer religious system. Unfortunately this is far from a realized fact. Impressible and intelligent natures may be affected by mere symbolism, although the Christianity which is the result of regeneration "profiteth nothing" under the most significant ritualism. But with the people—the mass, almost untold in numbers—who are accredited with the devoutest feeling toward "Holy Church" there is no affinity between symbolical circumstances and spiritual intelligence. Now there are two contending forces in Seven Dials which are always coming into violent contact. There are a large number of most intelligent professed sceptics and an equally large—perhaps larger—class of Romanists who profess to have some sort of aptitude for arguing about the truths of religion. The sceptics always get the best of the wrangle because they know most of the Scriptures, while the Romanist scarcely ever reads the Inspired Volume. The latter are reckoned amongst the ignorant who (according to the Missal) are not permitted to read the Word of God, lest they wrest it to their own destruction. Our eccentric friend does battle with these Romanists in a most scientific way, and even among the sceptics he has had some most successful battles. And grand consistent Christians these sceptics make when the power of divine grace has subdued them to Christ. Mr. G——'s warfare is entirely of the guerilla type, and like Fiddler Joss he neglects no opportunity to say a stray word for the Master. For instance, he once met an Irishman on the Dials, a real six-footer, who was three-parts drunk, and who was crying out most lustily, "Who are you for? The Pope or Garibaldi!" G—— answered, "I'm for Jesus Christ, who are you for?" "Shure and I'm the same," answered the Irishman. This conversation ultimately led the drackard to become a teetotaller, and now he is a morally reformed man. To show the ignorance of the poor Irish of everything connected with the leading provisions of the gospel, I will give a sad illustration. G—— the morning following the adventure in the Rookeries already described, visited the house for the purpose of reading to the women who had counselled the violent brothers to listen to what "the gentleman had to say." He read to them, while they were washing, the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel. They were quiet until he came to the words, "Except a man be born

again," &c. One of the women dropped her clothes into the tub, and burst out into a fit of laughter, and said, "Shure, ar'nt you p'yching it now," and accused him of "making it all up," and argued against the impossibility of a re-birth, just as Nicodemus did. Indeed it is the common experience of those who visit the Catholics of St. Giles that they know nothing of the way of salvation, and are content with believing in the efficacy of good works, by which they mean attending the ceremonial observances of the "Holy Catholic Church."

The last illustration I shall give out of this sick visitor's experiences, will serve to show the necessity of genuine manifested earnestness on the part of all labourers for Christ. Our friend once visited a dying man, a tailor, and his earnestness on that occasion was such that the poor man blessed and thanked God that he had sent some one to see him who really cared for his soul. It appears that a minister of the Episcopal sect had paid him a hurried visit, had read hurriedly and prayed hastily, without pressing eternal considerations upon him. "Sally," said the dying man, when the minister had left, "*that is sleepwork*; that man doesn't care about my soul."

Mr. Barnard preaches in the open air on the Dials, and his earnestness, combined with a temperate address, and appropriateness of subject and manner have made marked impressions on the roughest of men. It is found that the listeners in this district will take no notice of ranting; they must be addressed as men who have something superior to passions upon which to work. If you slightly compliment their understanding—and that you may conscientiously do of many of them—they will think all the better of your wisdom. They appreciate anecdotes and illustrations, especially those which are adduced from the newspapers of the past week. Newspapers they read, or will get some one to read to them. They have a great prejudice against those who are paid for their services as preachers, and would prefer a man living by sin than by the gospel. One of the helpers has a habit of watching the crowd collected to hear Mr. M'Cree preach, and should there be any one who is troubled with the gift of oratory and wishes to interrupt the speaker, the spy manages to draw him away to battle it out with him. Of course others follow to see "fair fight," and thinking there is a disturbance a number of watchers-on will join, and thus another audience is obtained and another sermon preached.

If the reader imagines all this I have been describing is easy work, let him try it, and the probability is that the first attempt would be a failure—perhaps worse. Men and women who patronise such establishments as that in Gibbett Street, where there is an announcement in a barber's window, that "Ladies and gentlemen who have met with a black eye, can have it effectually concealed by a perfectly harmless process!" or who need the application of such a process, are not the easiest characters to influence for good. Yet Mr. M'Cree and his excellent helpers, who devote the little leisure they have to evangelistic work, are possessed of a power which enables them to do pretty much as they please with the coarsest of men. A friend has aptly ascribed Mr. M'Cree's influence to the invariable law of kindness on which he acts, swathing it always in unseen bands of iron. The following extract from a lecture by Mr. M'Cree will show the character of some of the people of his diocese:—

"In one of my visits I went into a back cellar; there was a bed, a kettle, and a pan,—that was all the furniture. The floor was drenched with filth, and the walls reeking with the wet, and yet they paid two shillings a week for it. I was struck with the ignorance of the man, and I invited him to come to my house to supper, telling him that I wanted to see him. I had this man to supper, and I gave him some coffee, and bread and butter, and other simple fare, and I sat down to talk to him. I asked if he knew anything of the ten commandments?—No.—Did he know who Moses was?—Oh yes; he is the great tailor.—Did he know anything of Jesus?—No; never heard of the name that he knew of.—Could he say the Lord's Prayer?—He could say Our Father; that's all. 'How do you get your living?' I continued. 'I goes into the country to gather herbs, and comes back and sells them. I get up at two o'clock in the morning sometimes, and walks twenty or twenty-four miles into the country, without anything to eat, or a copper in my pocket.' 'Well, and what do you do now on a stormy day, after walking so far without anything to eat or drink, and getting your herbs; what do you do then?'—'I does the best I can, sir.' 'Yes, I have no doubt you do; but how do you do?' 'Well, sir, I have sometimes felt so miserable that I have set down under a hedge and cried.'

"Now, that is only one little history which I have found in that street. One day a man came to me and told me his wife had died. I sympathized with the poor man, and said I hoped that she had died in peace? 'Yes sir,' the man answered, 'she only asked for one thing, and that was a pork sausage.' Another case was that of a man who made portmanteaus. I went into his room, and found him at work, but he told me he did not want me; he was not a Christian, and did not believe the Bible. He said, 'I tell you what I do, I go into a public-house, and throw down a sovereign, and challenge any man to understand the first chapter he comes at in the Bible, and no one ever can, so I pick my

sovereign up again and walk off.' 'Oh!' said I, 'we'll try that now, if you please.' 'I'm willing,' said he. So I sat down beside him. I pulled out my Bible; I opened it at random, and asked him if I had done it fairly. He said, 'Yes.' My eye fell on a verse, and I read, 'Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered;' and I then read the remainder of the 32nd Psalm, and said, 'Do you understand that?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'I think I do.' 'Very well,' I said, 'try again.' I opened the book again at random, and read, 'Let all bitterness and wrath, all clamour and evil speaking cease from among you, and put away all malice; but be you kind one towards another, forgiving one another, as God hath forgiven you.' 'Do you understand that?' I asked. 'Yes,' he said. 'Well, let us try again.' I opened again, and read the chapter which speaks of the duties of the husband and wife, the father and mother, and when I had finished, the man exclaimed, 'Why, bless me, sir, if any one had done that at the public-house I should have lost my sovereign.'"

It must not be forgotten that this mission is supported by the church and congregation of Bloomsbury Chapel, over which the Rev. W. Brock presides. Nor would it be just to omit to add how much the whole mission is indebted to the sympathy and personal help afforded by Mr. Brock. The church has done itself high honour in its support of this organization for external aggressive work.

CHAPTER XIV.

POOR SARAH.

In a populous thoroughfare, not far from the busiest haunts of merchant life, there resided some years ago a singular unmarried couple. To find them out it was necessary to pass through an innocent little milkshop, up some dingy stairs that creaked like new boots, proverbially said to be unpaid for, and shook as though they were subject to some staircase-fever, into a top back room which, however clean and tidy, was, like most small rooms that accommodatingly serve as kitchen, parlour, and bed-room, redolent with smells proceeding from articles derived from all quarters of the globe. Old Dinah's pocket was a marvellous emporium of a variety of goods that had no natural affinity; and if nutmeg-graters, spice, blue, tobacco, and pocket-handkerchiefs could speak, we fear they would have been aghast at their close alliance to each other. We care not to analyse the variety of smells which one whiff will take in when you visit such humble domestic establishments as that in which "Poor Sarah" lived with her deaf sister. This little room

is no worse than many others ; indeed, it is far better than most of its neighbours : it is near the skies, and is the better for it. The leaden clouds hanging like a pall overhead, remind' you of coffins and funeral arrangements ; and through such a dull atmosphere the persevering sun will sometimes shoot out a few benignant rays. Those rays—great revealers of home neglectfulness, of cobwebs, and dust ; fierce enemies to the cheap varnish that cracks in the sun's honest face!—should be welcomed as cheery friends ; but they so rarely come, than when they do manifest their presence, their glowing brightness is deemed to be unblushing, and, like too familiar visitors, they are unceremoniously told, as the blinds are lowered, “they are not wanted here.” • Alas ! good genial sun, thou hast the misfortune of having a red face ; and as thou wilt not hide thy colours, but like a true soldier will persist in appearing—which is not too often in this dull country—in full regimentals, thou art treated as a boldheaded intruder, and thy room is thought to be better than thy company. • Old maids never like thee, thou barefaced sun ; the full-moon, when not prefaced by honey, is their universal favourite—the emblem of innocence and of youth—for, like them, it is never old, and when it looks most aged is only waiting a favourable time when it will appear *new*. Yet when the sun did dart forth a friendly ray into this top room, it lent its aid inrevealing many little mysteries that were shrouded in dingy darkness. For instance, and most notably, did it display to good advantage two fine old tom cats, couchant like lions in two arm-chairs. These chairs were their quiet resting-places. They were each guarded like sacred enclosures ; to infringe upon each other's rights, for one to poach on the other's manor—that is, to attempt to gain forcible possession of the wrong chair, was a declaration of war more fierce than was ever waged this side of Kilkenny. These cats were honoured by their owner, who would starve that they might not hunger. That owner was———deaf ; did you think I was going to write an old maid ? •

• But in the room, lying or sitting in a bed, the coverings of which are snow-white—“white as drip” some ladies say, whatever that may fully mean—was an object curious, yet pleasant, to behold. A poor woman, contracted, cramped, for thirty years an intense sufferer from rheumatism, ill-living, and bad-treatment, lies contentedly

there. You are told that she is a marvel of God's grace displayed triumphantly over weakness and infirmity. Her cheerfulness has a merry, genuine ring about it; her face betokens the joyousness of her heart. "She seems full of the Holy Ghost," remarked a Baptist minister once, who was struck by her happy saint-like face. And those who know her best, and were most with her, confessed their amazement at seeing so contracted and disease-stricken a form the temple of a Spirit that made her unceasingly happy. This is "Poor Sarah." She is no longer poor in any sense. Five or six years ago she inherited her blessed possessions; passed from a garret in St. Luke's to a mansion in heaven; from a scene of misery and pain to a region of joy and happiness. The story of her life, as told me by one whom she recognised as her pastor, though she never heard him preach nor entered his chapel, I now propose to relate.

Poor Sarah's father was a hair cloth weaver. She was the eldest child of a large family. All her life she was immured in London. No Sunday-schools, then took her and her childish companions into the green fields. She never saw in her life a wheat or barley field. Her knowledge of oak trees was derived from the possession of a few acorns given her by some friends, and she became acquainted with the nature of wheat crops by obtaining some ears of corn. Her father died while she was a little maid-of-all-work. She left this employment to work for longer hours at weaving. From five in the morning till ten o'clock at night she laboured on; it was a life of toil unbroken by pleasant associations. To awake her in the morning tin-kettles hanging from a high window-sill in her bedroom were rattled by a night policeman who would, at a given hour, pull the string. Her little heart was at that time unattracted by the Saviour. She preferred labour on Sundays to attendance at God's house. She knew no more of the suburbs of London than a New Zealander who had lived all his days in the trackless forest. She once ventured as far as St. George's in the Borough, but on crossing the bridge the sight of so much water made her head giddy. Subsequently she attended to a relative's domestic arrangements, and while thus engaged suffered severely from rheumatism. The cholera came. She fell a victim to what seemed worse than death. She never recovered from this attack. She was obliged to use crutches.

Her friends did not well treat her. Indeed, she suffered much at their hands. Once she was resolved to effect her own destruction. With the help of her crutches she hobbled to the window. Opening it, she succeeded so far as to put her head through it, but by the interposition of providence, she could not force her body through for lack of power. Some one ran up stairs, and by her help she was placed again in her bed. Sarah never referred to this circumstance without giving vent to her feelings of gratitude in language derived from the "sweet singer of Israel," whose songs she loved. On three other occasions did her heavenly Father interpose for her. A relative who lived with her at one period, grew weary and impatient of attending to the wants of the emaciated sufferer. She, it appears, had been worried and driven to desperation by her low circumstances. So vexed was she at the small sum received one morning for the shirts she had made, that she threatened to "finish" poor Sarah on her return from shopping. To be "finished" may be an admirable condition of things in an educational point of view, though even that is absurd. To be "finished" in the sense of being "polished," a threat common enough among schoolboys, may be grievous to the flesh that endures the trial. But the "finishing" with which Poor Sarah was threatened had a murderous signification. In all Sarah's trials she betook herself to him who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." She had hardly ceased praying when her relative came in, limping like a cripple. She had disabled herself by running a hook into her foot, and, full of her own trouble, was prevented accomplishing what she had it in her heart to effect. Nor was this the only deliverance "Poor Sarah" experienced. On one occasion this same person, infuriated by evil passions, rose to strike the bed-ridden creature, but in doing so she missed her aim, and striking the unimpressible bed-post put out her own shoulder. She made a similar attempt on a subsequent day, which was so signally defeated, that, convinced the destinies were against her, she ceased her cruel attempts to injure one who was so manifestly sustained and preserved by the hand of God.

A young lady who was in the habit of visiting the poor of St. Luke's, in connection with Mr. Farley's little church in St. James Street, found out Poor Sarah one fortunate day. This person was a famous helper in all good works. Her enthusiasm for Christ and his

cause was wonderful. One day she met a crossing-sweeper in the streets: "Do you ever go to chapel, my good woman?" she prettily asked. "No, ma'am." "But wouldn't you like?" "Perhaps, ma'am." "Will you come with me now; I am going to one close by." "Can't, ma'am, what could I do with my broom?" "Oh, I'll manage that for you," and so saying she took the broom, hid it under her mantle, and arriving at the chapel, placed it behind the door, and its owner in a comfortable seat.

Poor Sarah was in great want when this good woman first saw her. She had scarcely any clothes; and was shivering in the cold. A friend called, afforded suitable help, made up some warm flannel, and collected regularly from those with whom she worked in a warehouse close by, in halfpennies and pence, two shillings a-week, money she would say "for my *bird*," for Sarah's surname was Bird. But it was through the conversation and pleadings of the first visitor that poor Sarah was led to put her trust in him who, through the rest of her days, was her Lover and Comforter. What grace did in transforming her abject life into one of the brightest and most brilliant manifestations of Christian experiences, no pen can adequately describe. The blessed influences of her life of sacred communion dropped, like fruit that falls to the ground by the weight of its own ripeness, for the refreshment of all whose hearts were with her in fellowship. If her daily life could not convince sceptics of the truth and power of Christianity, all the books on "evidences" would be useless. In her life was verified this sweet saying, "The flower of Christian graces grows only under the shade of the cross, and the root of them all is humility." Her whole days were seemingly spent in thankfulness and in praise. It was said by Epictetus, that if he were a nightingale, he would by singing fulfil the vocation of a nightingale; if he were a swan, he would fulfil the vocation of a swan; but since he was a reasonable being, it was his calling to praise God. Those who knew Poor Sarah testify that her constant song was, "While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being." She used to say when reviewing all the kind mercies of a loving Father, "Ah, sir, I am lost in wonder, love, and praise."

For more than sixteen years had she lain in bed, helpless, yet she would say, "It is wonderful I should be continued here, when so

many who are young and active are taken away. The thought that my sins are forgiven, and my dependence is on the great love of Jesus, my Saviour, makes me content to remain here until he is good enough to call me home."

She would lay awake in the night, communing with her Saviour, and meditating on his promises. She would say she never wanted a candle to help her to think of them. She was too poor, generally, to burn a candle, except in time of illness. The friends who visited her brought in their own light. A neighbour once did a thoughtful action. She considered how lonely Sarah must be without any one or any light, in the room; so she determined to give the poor cripple her clock. She brought it. "A very great comfort it was to me," observed Sarah, "to hear it tick, and see how the time went; but afterward it stopped. We tried to have it mended, but my friend who gave it to me feared it was a deception, sold to her by an American that went about with such things; still I liked to look at it for her kindness' sake." But she had better company. Her friend who had been the means of leading her to Christ would frequently talk with her about the good things touching the kingdom. Two neighbours would visit her by turns, and attend to her wants; and in long summer's evenings would bring their needlework and sit by her side. Mr. Farley tells me that so little did Poor Sarah need "nature's kind restorer—sleep," that she seldom slept more than two hours during the night. Many happy, joyous prayer-meetings has he held in this room, and many Christian workers, toiling among the lowest classes of the "roughs," were strengthened in their work by the influences of those unique gatherings.

A heart so full of praise was never silent when it was possible to recount God's acts of loving kindness. She always had some rich tale of providential deliverance with which to interest her visitors. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," was a text which she could illustrate in a hundred ways out of her own wonderful experience. One day, when living with her deaf sister, she had nothing in the house to eat, save a mouldy crust, which in her temper, her sister brought to her bedside, saying, "There, that is all the parish will allow you this week!" "Never mind," was the answer, "cut out the crumb, and wipe the crust with a clean cloth, and if you've got any butter, scrape it together." While this was being done, a

knock was heard at the bed-room door. It was her friend who first led her to love the Saviour, who came with a loaf in her hand, which she had just bought at a baker's for her poor friend.

When she lived in an adjoining court, a fire broke out in the house. Even the beam over her bed caught on fire. She lay, however, calm and serene, watching the leapings of the flames, assured that God would somehow prevent them hurting her. Her friends removed her to a room in another house, of which she became the tenant.

Once she was sad at heart, for there was little for breakfast in the morning. Unbelief came in, and she almost gave way to its insidious advances. Before breakfast next morning, a gentleman unknown to her and to her friends, knocked at her door. "Very early," he kindly observed, "to disturb an invalid, but I thought that I would just leave this parcel on my way to the city," and so saying he placed a packet on a chair near the door, and went away. Poor Sarah had of course the innate curiosity that characterises her sex, rich and poor, ill or well, and it seemed a long time till her friend belonging to Mr. Farley's church, came upstairs, and opened the parcel for her. When it was opened, imagine her delight on seeing the necessary articles for more than one breakfast, viz., half-a-pound of tea, half-a-pound of coffee, a pound of loaf and an equal quantity of moist sugar. Nor was that the only gift of the day. The expected gift which she had doubted whether she would have received, came also, and so once more was Jesus' better to her than her doubts and fears.

For nine or ten years poor Sarah received one shilling a week from the Sick Fund in connection with the church in James street, besides other helps from friends who were raised up at various times to relieve the necessities of the poor woman. Toward the latter end of her life she received from a number of sources, sufficient to meet her current necessities, without being exercised in any way. Yet she never manifested so brilliantly the splendour of a life of faith as when she lived wholly upon its daily exercise. Never was her influence so magnetic as then. The large amount of sympathy evoked on her behalf from all who heard of her story, was, if any thing, likely to deaden the effulgence of that wonderful life that seemed so thoroughly to have been irradiated by the divine sunlight.

To us it has been quite a treat to look over the clean-looking Bible which poor Sarah loved so to read. This Bible she obtained

in the days of her deep distress, by going without butter and sugar to pay a penny a week for it. She had only the use of one thumb. Her other hand and all her fingers, with the exception of this thumb, were stiff and useless. *She had to lift the leaves of her Bible with a fork*, but so carefully was this done that there are not, so far as I can see, any impressions from the prongs. It is curious and refreshing to observe the chapters and verses which seemed to have been most blessed to her. It would be impossible to enumerate them all. Yet I noticed that the one hundred and thirtieth Psalm must have been peculiarly precious to her waiting heart, which would have thrilled responsive to the psalmist's experience: "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." The same may be said of the eighty-sixth Psalm, the twelfth and thirteenth verses of which are emphatically marked, as though they were doubly expressive of her noblest convictions: "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." Matthew twelfth, eighteenth verse, "My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased," was a passage which seemed to have been peculiarly appropriate to her appropriating faith. She

"In that charter read, with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies."

What a fine, strongly-drawn mark there is at the twentieth verse of the second chapter of Paul's epistle to the Galatians: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And in the presence of a joy unspeakable and full of glory about to be revealed to her, Faith, like an enchantress, rose from the sordid earth, and with a wave of her magic wand, dispelled the mists of sin and doubt: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Through the generosity of kind friends to whom the story of her life had become known, and the temporal and spiritual help afforded through the Bible-woman of the district, poor Sarah spent the last few years of her life in comparatively comfortable circumstances. To the kind visitors in connection with the little active church in James street, and to its pastor, Mr. Farley, whose care for her was

unremitting, she owed much for her sustenance and consolation. It has given the writer no little pleasure to have learned how much a small working men's congregation may do for the Master, and the Master's poor in a quiet, unostentatious way. The little community worshipping in James street has for some years past struggled with the ignorance and destitution of a large number of hard-working artisans of third-rate position, has relieved hundreds of the deserving and starving poor, to whom the word of God has been given, and has, by its persevering and earnest sick visitors been the means of bringing many poor sinners to hear the gospel of the blessed God. The pastor being a tradesman, gives his services voluntarily, and to his exertions and liberality the cause has been greatly indebted from its commencement. There is a debt of £300 upon the chapel, and Mr. Farley has promised to pay £150 of it, provided the remainder be subscribed within a given period. Through the assistance of those whose hearts may be moved to help a church that, though very poor, subscribes over £100 per annum for benevolent and other purposes without any external aid, it is hoped that the chapel debt, which is an incommbrance, may be speedily removed, so that the institutions of the church may be strengthened. We hold that in neighbourhoods like that of St. Luke's, where the poor are absolutely unable to raise a salary for a minister, men like Mr. Farley, who can devote their leisure voluntarily to so good a work, are serving God and his church in a noble, Christian spirit. And to us it is a source of the highest gratification to find that God has greatly blessed the work of this community—the church, the Sabbath-school, and the other organisations being in a flourishing and increasingly prosperous condition. May those who for so long a period ministered to the necessities of so afflicted a saint as poor Sarah—for sixteen years bedridden and a helpless cripple—be abundantly rewarded here—and beyond!

CHAPTER XV.

WESTMINSTER.

HISTORICALLY, Westminster is the most remarkable city in the world. For proof thereof consult any hand-book on London you

can beg, borrow or—purchase. Socially, it is no less remarkable. For centuries, the richest and the poorest may be said to have met together in its streets and avenues, its gardens and slums. It has been the haunt of the rich, and the chosen delight of the poor; the residence of law-makers, and the home of law-breakers. So fair is the city, with its beautiful structures, that it looks like a saint; so begrimed with dirt and reeking with filth are its back streets, that it typifies the demon of the human soul. Even now—such are the accretions of ages—its most magnificent buildings are skirted by pestiferous dens; and these are infested by hideous humanity, tortured by pain, victimised by intemperance, wasted by lust, and batten- ing on its own corruption. In “the good time coming,” the date of which it would be desirable to fix, we are assured that chemistry will be so perfected that London smoke will be condensed into solid globes of carbon, resembling, on a more imposing scale, homœopa- thic globules—those pretty little mysteries!—which will be burnt at night, so that public expenditure may be economised, the clouds rendered clearly observable to the human eye by day, and the exor- bitant profits of gas companies considerably reduced. It is greatly to be desired, for the sake of the inhabitants of Westminster, that this long-expected day of the triumphs of chemistry may speedily come. Probably, however, they would be satisfied if factories con- sumed their own smoke.

Many attempts have been made to ruin and improve Westminster city. Whole streets of working-men's houses have been pulled down in order to drive away the filthy and the degraded; and courts and alleys have been preserved for the ostensible good of the respectable, but for the actual benefit of the fallen and impure. Such is the per- versity of humanising societies that wish to reap large dividends for their “improvements.” The changes, in this respect have, perhaps, been more numerous here than in any other part of the metropolis. The poor have, of course, been driven to overcrowding in the wretched houses that remain; the common lodging-houses are still fill- ed with thieves and scamps; the alleys are the resort of grumbling costermongers, and the large model lodging-house, called Westminster Buildings, is almost bereft of the families for whom it was designed, and is full of those for whom one room is considered a luxury, and two rooms a burden, and an unnecessary evil.

Walk through some of the remaining fever polluted haunts, and you are struck with the comatosed state of the stolidly indifferent beings, who are insensible to their wretchedness and oblivious of a more elevated existence. Some, like eagles from their eyrie, are ready to pounce upon any offending neighbour, with whom a quarrel and a fight are inevitable necessities of close friendship, and to whom an answer demands much physical enforcement to send it home with any power. To hear the jabbering Irishwomen talk is to realise Babel in one individual. As for intelligible utterance, clear pronunciation and calm delivery—these are relegated to other and more cold-blooded people, to whom rapidity of speech would be a speedy exhaustion of ideas. You are surprised to see so many of the coster class, apparently, toiling and idling, smoking and chaffing. What is their occupation? where their employment? As they plunge their hands into the hidden recesses of pockets which serve as depositories for all manner of articles, or swear with vigour, or denounce with emphasis each other, the thought arises of their importance in a certain circle of acquaintance, and their varied and perfect knowledge of the most prominent government houses which are variously dignified and described by those who wish to conceal the fact of their prolonged and compulsory residence in them. Thieves still lodge in Westminster, though typhus fever, imprisonment, demolition of houses, emigration and transportation, have somewhat diminished their number. As the policemen will tell you, however, the larger number work in retirement, or hoodwink the public by carrying on respectable trades. A few years ago, a civil-looking, fair-dealing butcher, to whom the visits of Christian visitors were generally acceptable, was ferreted out by a keen-witted policeman, and discovered to be a bank-note forger on a most enterprising scale. This man, Buncher by name, was never suspected of wrong-doing; while another man, also transported, was a pest not only to the godly, but also to the most ungodly. He was a wife-fighter, an awful blasphemer, and a ringleader in all street rows. So greatly was he execrated by his own associates, that this coiner of forty years was regarded by his friends as the most notorious blackguard in London. And the atmosphere was cleared of much moral pollution by his embarkation. Yet this man, whom all feared and shunned, detested and despised, whose daring in wickedness seemed unequalled, whose perfection in his sad art of

coinage was so marked that his coins were always recognised as his at the mint, but whose cleverness was so great that up to the period of his arrest, the police could never catch him so as to get a conviction—this foul blot in humanity would often appear affected while he was being reasoned with on righteousness and judgment to come, “No man in the district,” says the London City Mission’s agent, “would sooner take my part if any one said a word against me, or insulted me in any way.”

How miserably degraded some parts of Westminster are, may be judged by the fact that in one district visited by a missionary there are seven hundred visitable families, and not twenty persons who give signs of a regenerated life. These families have five gin-shops provided for them, five openly bad houses, and eight that are suspected; and in one of them three sisters live in sin, one being married and supporting her husband by her infamy. This is not a large, but a very small district. The houses are in a wretched condition, there are no back yards, nor back windows; some of the cellars are inhabited; a whole family live together in one room, frequently not more than ten feet square, and it is not unusual to find a shoemaker at work in the midst of the family. The streets, in which most of the poor creatures spend the best of their days, present all the characteristics indigenous to such a neighbourhood. Gambling was a favourite pastime, especially on the Sabbath; but this has been somewhat checked. The day is still desecrated by boys playing at marbles, at pitch and toss, and by women and girls amusing themselves with the shuttle-cock. A fight is no unusual source of merriment, although Irish rows, and Irish screams, and Irish bullying, and cowardice, are never rare where there is a nest of these choice residents. And notably is it true with them that quarrels would never develop into serious issues were there no spectators, no peace-lovers, no mediators, and consequently no one to believe that meddling is a virtue, and fighting a vice. For the latter conviction becomes a nuisance in such a locality, inasmuch as it frequently leads to fighting when it is not seriously contemplated. “Peace at any price,” you say. Yes, but you can’t enforce it by interfering or by giving away a tract. Fetch a constable should the conflict show a serious head; let the affairs alone, if you do not, since the skirmish will be likely to evaporate in words. The sight of a meddler seems to put

an Irishman on his mettle ; contact with a policeman will exasperate but ultimately quiet him ; a kind word will only add fuel to the fire. Perhaps, after all, no one can so successfully put an end to what the reporters call a *melee*, as a priest. Before a priest, an ignorant Irishman is a dumb fool.

And yet, no fairer field for Christian enterprise can be found than in these haunts. Wherever the depraved are, the influences of the gospel should be felt. The time has gone by for submitting to that spirit of Pharisaism which shuts out the lost from Christian calculations and sympathies. Whatever fault may be found with the church of Christ in the present day, it cannot be said that it despairs of alleviating human misery, or refuses to touch pollution lest it should become polluted. The churches that hedge themselves in from the world, that refuse to associate with any but the elect, that have no sympathising ear, no helping hand, no warm hearts to pity, no willing feet to run, no active sentiments to stimulate, are miserably few, contemptibly weak, and are returning fast to the vile dust of decay and dissolution. Human sympathy is attracting everywhere the hearts of the wretched from a life of which they are tired ; Christian holiness is drawing admiration in men and women long diseased, long suffering from sin ; the strength of holy firmness, the unflinching ardour of noble courage, the penetrating sweetness of a gracious simplicity, displayed in seeking among the ruins of fallen nature, doubly lost—lost to God, lost to themselves—and in exhibiting the cross, and him who died thereon, is vanquishing hearts long scared by wickedness, and subduing wills long perverted to hellish principles. This blessed work of rescuing humanity from its thralldom, and breaking the iron bonds of spiritual slavery is a glorious occupation—

" 'Tis what might fill an angel's heart,
And filled the Saviour's hands."

Westminster is carefully looked after by the various churches, although we doubt whether they do as much as the Roman Catholics. Men will

" Make flexible the knees of knotted oaks"

to compass the work of proselytising. The Sisters of Mercy, with their black dress and beads, and coal-skuttle bonnets—the last remaining vestige to teach the present generation that formerly bonnets were worn—are ever busy in the lowest haunts of misery. In them

indolence has received its death-shock. Like the Syrophenician woman, though surrounded by difficulties, they are not discouraged; though God himself frown, they persevere. Such obedience to duty, so entire, so earnest, meets with its reward. They insinuate themselves into the good opinions of the poor, who are won by their kindness, subdued and awed by their authority. The Rev. Samuel Martin and his congregation work among the degraded, and largely help them in their poverty. The Baptist Church in Romney-street has a staff of lodging-house visitors, who preach and teach those who manifest as little regard to virtue and outward cleanliness as they do to religious principles. The London City Mission labours here, and though not so much by preaching as some of the missionaries would desire, yet by visitation and instruction good is done. This work is not altogether easy, and results cannot always be chronicled, in consequence of the migratory habits of the people. There are plenty of schools, and so well has the district been canvassed that it is only among the lowest of the inhabitants that the children are entirely neglected. This neglect is due partly to the parents' dislike or carelessness respecting education, and to the early habits of incorrigible rebellion formed by the children themselves. The missionary conducts small devotional services—so he tells us in one of his reports—and those who attend consist of persons who have not listened to a religious service for years. They frequently come without shawl or bonnet. "One woman, who gets her living at her needle, is so interested in these meetings, that she keeps the room (an upper room) clean, opens it, preserves order, and frequently goes out before the service begins to invite the people in, and all without remuneration." Similar services are held for the servants of the Westminster Palace Hotel. The work of visitation is characterised by most hopeful features. When the visit is rejected, which is a rare occurrence, it is generally done with a measure of politeness which "breaks the fall." The interest attending each visit varies. Sometimes it is marked by extreme indifference, as though the truths conveyed met with no sort of response; at other times enquiry is evoked, and the visitor is greatly encouraged in his work; and now and then, through the mercy of God, hearts long hardened, minds long bent to evil purposes, consciences long blunted and deadened, have been softened, enlightened,

and aroused. The first effect will be a moral one. Their lives need renovating; they knew it long ago, and confessed it, sometimes in a jaunty spirit, at other time with sadness. Now, in sincerity of spirit and earnestness of purpose, they desire to "turn over a new leaf." The reader may understand that homely expression, and think the work which it implies a comparatively easy one. Truth to tell, it is consummately difficult for some who are surrounded by temptations and sins which lose none of their potency, though much of their fascination. There is the temptation to live in satisfaction with a low standard of right and wrong. This temptation to conventional morality comes alike to all classes in all conditions of life. It comes in a low, gross form to the poor, but it is none the less a triumph of grace to conquer it. There is, too, the temptation to continue receiving ill-gotten gains. It comes to a poor costermonger, who has the choice before him of obtaining £3 or £4 a week by his old ways of cheating the public, or of relinquishing great profits and dishonest gains for one quarter of his usual receipts. The temptation is none the less strong because he is a poor, illiterate fellow, and not a fine, educated university man who has swindled the public through bubble companies. Nor are the heart-strugglings against the oppressive dread of prosecution diminished by the condition of life of these new aspirants after God and goodness. His must be a brutal, unsympathising heart that can mock at the tyrannous world of passions which fight for the mastery over a soul just born to God, with but a simple, weak faith, trembling heart, and very imperfect knowledge. But oh! when the hour and the agony of temptation has past, when the craven fear has fled, and the insidious seductress of mischief departed, and the divinely-imparted strength has laid low the soul's great foe, and faith has triumphed, and hope has revived, and joy has animated and cheered the distressed heart—then gratitude fills the soul, and music flows from thankfulness, and confidence springs into noble activity. It is something worth knowing

"How sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong."

And the triumphs of divine grace over human weakness have their lessons for us, whether they be won over our own hearts or over those of the poorest.

Two kinds of work are most useful in Westminster—perhaps three. *Open-air preaching* on Sunday afternoons in courts and by-streets, though attended by limited numbers, is surrounded by difficulties, but it is nevertheless owned and blessed by God. The missionary has two stations in courts which we have looked at, and found to be none of the sweetest or most desirable. The population is a mixed one—of English and Irish. “We never knew who heard the Word and who did not; for the houses were so close, and the streets so narrow, that they who chose to listen could do so without being seen or coming into the open street.” We are told that the quiet hearing of the Word much depends upon the amount of drink imbibed by the fallen women and their companions during the previous part of the day. “Numbers of young men would pass up and down, and in and out among the women, and frequently have they stopped to listen to the words of truth, the effect of which has been to make them feel uneasy in their minds, and they hardly had courage to enter the houses of iniquity, but waited and listened until drawn in by the raillery or pressing invitations of their companions.” A terrible picture; but alas! true to nature. Then there is preaching in *mission-rooms*, which in this neighbourhood are not easily filled, and—most important of all—*lodging-house visitation*. It appears there are now thirteen lodging-houses in the district, three of which are very large, and will unitedly accommodate about two hundred persons. They are tenanted by beggars and street hawkers. Sometimes there is interruption, of course; some one will suggest money as the one thing needful, just as the Duke of Abercorn lately thought that “more turnips” would cure Ireland’s ills; but a judicious speaker will turn such interpolations to advantage. When loquacious men are in liquor, even a lion-like man is liable to look confused at an incisive lampoon. But even these men are more impressible than the dogged and sullen, who have only a few thoughts and fewer ways of expressing them.

We might give several remarkable instances of good done by visitation among the wretched, but our allotted space has all but gone, and we must content ourselves with two cases; we select the two from the missionary’s report of 1873, solely because they are exceedingly striking, and in a measure representative of other of a later date. A poor fellow, of godly parents, was sent to college,

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obtained a good knowledge of Greek and Latin, became a Congregational minister, then was tutor at a Yorkshire college for some years, then travelled on the Continent, met one misfortune after another, was reduced to the lowest poverty, took to selling needles, paper, etc., in the London streets, and lacking decent clothing ceased to attend public worship. He attended the missionary's service, and subsequent conduct proved him to be a true child of God. He became a great help in the neighbourhood, and though he was so poor as scarcely to obtain more than bread and weak tea, yet he read and talked to the poor lodging-house people, and was much liked.

Here is another case, given, because it is so painfully romantic, in his own words, of a poor tinman, who could neither read nor write, and knew no more about religion than that he thought he was a sinner "like the rest of the folks." He says: "You knows, Mr. P——, I believe what you say, but you know, the likes of us, that never had any larning, who have always been travelling the country ever since we was born, it arn't to be thought that we could know much about these things. My father was a great drunkard all his life; he could earn plenty of money, but he used to spend it as fast as he earned it. I was born on the road, as we was travelling—at least, so my mother tells me—poor old girl! but she has been dead for years. From a boy I always travelled with my father. Warn't I frightened once! Blow me, if I warn't. Why, my old dad (father), said to me one day as we was near a wood, 'I say, boy, I have often said I will never die with my shoes on;' so he climbed a tree, I at the same time crying to him not to do it—for I was but quite a boy, about twelve years old. He got up the tree, chucked me down his shoes, and says, 'Hero goes, boy,' and hung himself with his neck handkerchief. I ran to a man close by, in the road, filling a dung-cart, and told him my father had hung himself, and asked him to come and cut him down; but he would not, saying he warn't going to cut him down if he was fool enough to hang himself. So I ran crying, and met two gentlemen in the road. They came just in time to save my poor old father's life; but he was ill a long time, and at last he died raving mad, through drink, a few years after."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PUBLIC-HOUSES.

A London gin-palace needs scarcely to be described. * Most persons are acquainted with its exterior aspects. Its massive plate glass windows, solid mahogany doors, artistically decorated and gilded pilasters, architraves, and friezes, flaming gas, polished metal pipes, and gaily coloured vats, have made it the most unblushingly conspicuous sight in the streets of London. Nor need we picture the scenes of riot, of indelicacy, showy vulgarity, and intemperance, which are too frequently witnessed in and outside these drinking establishments. Nor shall we describe the less pretentious beer-houses, nor those dingy-looking pseudo coffee-houses, in which if any one were to ask for refreshments he would be ridiculed. We shall assume our readers to be sufficiently well acquainted with the external character of these houses at least; and as our object is to depict vice and intemperance, we shall content ourselves with a simple unvarnished recital of some of the most interesting facts with which we have become acquainted.

The larger number of our readers, will, in all probability, be surprised to learn that there are such persons as missionaries to public-houses. This feature of the many-sided work of the London City Mission does not strike one as peculiarly appropriate. We have so long and so justly regarded gin-palaces as part of the domains of the evil One, that they do not appear, at first sight, to be the most desirable places in which to scatter the good seed of the kingdom. The bare thought of entering a music hall or dancing saloon for this purpose, seems an outrage upon Christian delicacy and honesty. And yet, personally undesirable as these spheres of usefulness may be to most of missionaries from which they should instinctively shrink as from a foul leprosy, many persons have had cause to thank God for the felicity that sprang from contact with good and brave men who have sought out the lost from these borders of hell. We candidly confess that we have not been able on this occasion to "screw up courage" to visit with the missionary the low haunts of infamy, vice, and degradation, to which he goes every night. We have visited some of the lowest haunts of poverty and ruffianism, and would not object to do so again were any good purpose to be served thereby, but to enter those nests of profligacy which, under the

cloak of coffee-houses and dancing saloons, are the seminaries of sensuality in its vulgarest forms, is more than the author would do were his existence dependent upon it. And yet these missionaries venture, leaning wholly on the divine strength, to enter the doors leading close to perdition, to snatch from the burning those whom the Lord God would call. They witness, as one of them writes, scenes that are disgusting in the extreme, and hear language of a most diabolical character. One of these men observes, "I often go to a public-house door, and push it open, and walk in, when my body goes in against my feelings, and I am compelled to cry to God for help. The door of a public-house is often to me a throne of grace, for there it is where I lift my heart to God, and look to him for support and success, and when I have most felt my weakness the Lord has given me the greatest success." I am indebted to my good friend, Mr. William Olney, who is one of the excellent of the earth, for an introduction to one of the public-house missionaries, whose district lies in Bermondsey and its neighbourhood. Mr. Olney's sympathies so naturally flow into the channel of evangelism, that no one who knows him will be surprised to learn that he acts as local superintendent for the City Mission, in Bermondsey, and is therefore well acquainted with the work of the gentleman who has furnished me with many of the facts recorded in this article.

Missionary effort in public-houses and music-halls must ever be regarded as strange, if not exceptional work. It is so felt by those who engage in it; yet the opportunities for usefulness are so great that the advantages override the difficulties. It is also considered to be strange work by the people who are visited. "Religion in a public-house!" some one will remark to the missionary, "Do you know, sir, this is no place for you or religion?" But, if this be said, and said it has been, some one will be sure to retort, "Why, Jack, if this be the devil's house, this is just the place for the gentleman to come to reform us." The publicans at first ridicule the effort, but, as we shall see further on, almost always countenance it. That there is absolute necessity for bearding the lion of sin in his den is only too apparent when we consider the number of persons who spend the best part of their leisure hours in these places. Anyone acquainted with domiciliary visitation to the poor will have recog-

nised the great difficulty of meeting with the men. Where are they to be found? Naturally, a minister of the gospel is anxious to protect his own reputation, and cannot visit public-houses to "get at" these people. This work must be left to missionaries; and therefore we most heartily commend the City Mission for the boldness of its policy in selecting hardy and godly men to visit those who, finding no attraction in their wretched homes, spend their evenings in public-houses. The work, of course, is essentially of an aggressive character, and for that reason we like it. There are, too, hosts of difficulties in connection with it. There is the bitter taunt, the black-guard language, the sottish effects of drink, the irritating misrepresentation, inuendo, and double meaning given to the clearest reasoning, the unconquerable force of degraded habit, the contact with fallen women, intolerable obscenity and foul blasphemy, the frequent presentation under subtle forms of the worst temptations, the obtuseness of the hardened intellect, and the pretentiousness of flimsy conceit. But then there are a number of striking advantages which those who preach in conventicles and visit the homes of the poor seldom get. The men are in the public-house at leisure, and will therefore grant the time for listening; they will bear to be lectured in a way that they would not submit to in the presence of their wives and children; the tracts will be sure to be read; not only one but dozens of men who are not to be reached by other agencies, are met with here; no privacy is invaded; no suspicion is excited among habitually suspicious men; and "a clear stage and no favour," or, in other words, fair-play is given where, under other surroundings, it might be denied. Great grace is wanted for this work. The company is sometimes dreadful; and to become familiar with scenes of vice must depress the mind and blunt the moral sensibilities. Even Lot could not live in Sodom without offering, whether as the result of rashness or heat in a moment of extreme perplexity or trial one can hardly determine, a compromise to the demands of the violent citizens. One may well pray for the preservation of the public-house missionaries. "Several nights," says one of them, "have I laid awake for hours and could not sleep—the language I had heard and the scenes I had witnessed preventing me; and yet amidst all this sin our heavenly Father has been pleased to work by the power of his Spirit."

I said, the landlords approved of the work of these men. This is greatly to their credit, and adds to the pleasure and encouragement of the workers. But it is not always that the first introduction to the publican is agreeable. It requires not a little tact, skill, and judgment, to obtain his good opinion. Perhaps the first question put to the missionary will be, "Do you want to make men teetotalers?" and if the missionary be a rigid abstainer his difficulties will be increased. Or, he may be invited into the parlour on account of his respectability, and asked what he will take. And perhaps he will be considered to have taken a liberty to intrude for a purpose so different from that of the customers. But in a few moments the frown of disappointment, if not vexation, will be exchanged for the smile of approval, as the proprietor will say, "Well, no doubt, your purpose is good, and you are welcome here." Indeed, the landlords have a deep personal regard for the visitor. In hundreds of instances they have given their hearty welcomes, and have well appreciated the errand on which the missionaries have been sent. Even some landladies will distribute the tracts which are left with them for the benefit of the most depraved of their customers. Cards containing mottoes prettily printed—such as, "Be sober," "Swear not at all," "Thou God seest me," &c., to the number of over five-hundred, have been distributed among publicans, and exhibited by them; some having previously enframed them in rosewood. "Whenever a customer swears," says one publican, "I direct him to that card, and it has checked many persons in using bad language." "Mate, we musn't swear now," said a man to his companion. "Ah! that's coming it too strong," remarked another, "if they left out 'Be sober,' it would do very well." In a club-room in a public-house in Lower Shadwell, each man who swears is fined one penny. There are many instances of a like nature, proving that when the patronage of publicans is obtained, good is frequently done. Many of them have manifested a kind of pride in having their establishments visited by a missionary. They have introduced him to their astonished patrons, and his efforts have been favourably referred to and highly commended by them. In two instances, they have insisted upon having the missionary's portrait taken, and have made him presents.

A few such publicans have been brought to the Saviour's feet, bowed down under the masterly influences of deep contrition. Their

wives, too, are often impressed with the importance of eternity and its solemn issues. Some of them are Christian women, striving earnestly to counteract by personal piety and constant pleading with their children, the evil influences under which their families are brought. Surrounded by such a miasma, it is no small difficulty for the flower of Christian virtues to grow. The soil is ungenial, the breezes are unhealthy, and the gloomy clouds too thick for the brightness of heaven's cheering rays. The missionaries declare that many publicans are unhappy in their business. One of their reports states:—"The landlady of the ——— told me, with tears streaming from her eyes, that she felt her soul was lost, and that she had been training up her children for hell all the years that she had been in the beer-trade: 'And now that my children have grown up,' she added, 'they turn round and abuse me: and if I talk to them about religion, they call me a maniac.'" Some publicans resist altogether the thought of religion, and abandon themselves to despair and to their evil destiny. A publican said to a missionary, "I can't be religious if I would. You come and take my place for twelve months, and that will soon knock all religion out of you." Their great gains—one of them advertises a gin-palace to let, "doing £250 a week over the bar," and another is known to pay £300 a month for malt—is a great barrier to a religious life. An increasing number are desirous of closing on the Sabbath day. Many do this already. Others are undergoing a favourable change of opinion on the subject. Still, these, I fear, are comparatively few; and although the missionaries seem to write hopefully as to the feeling among the publicans, the recent strong opposition to the bill placed before Parliament for restrictions upon Sunday trading does not speak favourably of the opinions of this class.

It would seem that in most districts there is a much larger proportion of men than of women who visit beer-houses. We are told by one of the mission agents that he meets with ten men to one woman. This average would not be found, of course, in gin-palaces, where a larger number of disreputable women congregate. But the women who are generally seen in common beer-houses are of the most degraded type. Their language is frequently beyond description. The men blaspheme at intervals, but the women seem never to stop, or allow of the possibility of an interval. The proprietors

of beer-houses, in low districts, get up special attractions for their customers. They have, as the police-courts sometimes reveal, "rat-pits," and bets are made upon dogs killing a given number of rats within a stated time. As an instance of the power of drinking habits, and the accommodating policy of the publicans, the Bermondsey missionary informed me that women will take off some of their clothing, and hand it over the bar for gin to the publican, who will retain the article until it is redeemed—of course, a perfectly illegal procedure, but one, I am assured, that is by no means uncommon."

A missionary's round on the Sunday night is full of incident. Rude and lewd talk is not banished. He goes in one tap-room, and finds a score of youths, with short-cropped hair, showing that their personal liberty has been guarded within prison walls, gambling for money. He is roughly received, but securing their attention by a reference to a forthcoming royal marriage, he passes on to Lord's parable of the marriage of the King's son. Some of the lads are deeply interested, and these leave the place for private conversation outside. In the parlour of the next beer-house, there are several tradesman and three young Frenchmen who wish to have a controversy respecting the claims of the Pope. In another public house, there are a number of Irish labourers, and—for the missionary always aims at appositeness—the parable of the builders is recited. The bar of another house is filled with soldiers. The missionary observes the entrance of a jolly-looking sailor, in company with a young woman. He tells them when Nelson at Trafalgar was shot, he cried, "I conquer," but he died; when the Christian died he cried, "I conquer" too, but he lived for ever. In the next tap—we are using one of the reports of the missionary—are some navvies, and two men who are deaf and dumb. With these latter, a conversation is entered upon by means of scraps of paper. A low gin-shop is next visited. "The bar was crowded with men of the baser sort. The barman held up the tract, and then tore it to pieces. He quickly exclaimed, 'We expect that sort of thing. I am a sower come out to sow, and some of my seed is sure to fall upon the wayside, or among thorns.' The men pressed round him, one of them declaring that Bishop Colenso had proved the Bible to be all a lie. He therefore took his seat upon a barrel, and read Matthew viii. 3—12, with com-

ments." Perhaps none of these men, and thousands are met with in the course of a few months, are ever seen again ; so that the results of this unobtrusive effort cannot be fully known until the day of universal revelation. A few months ago, a visit was paid to a thieves' den ; and as this will form the best illustration of the work of the missionaries among the lowest class of people, I give it entire :—

"One evening I met with a thief of my acquaintance, who informed me that 'a lot of chaps was as how going to have a little jaw together at the—beershop.' By this I understood that thieves of his order were to have a meeting among themselves. I therefore bent my steps towards the place. There were only two men before the bar, to whom I said a few words. The tap-room is in a very awkward place. A door opens from the bar into a dark passage conducting to the tap-room. As I approached this, the landlord, in an angry tone, exclaimed 'Don't go there.' I, however, hurried through. Upon entering the tap, I was met with a loud expression of disapprobation. About thirty men and youths were present, two of whom I know to be ticket-of-leave men, and several were known thieves. The majority were of the class known as 'sneaks,' or common thieves, and I was surprised to see several gentlemanly-looking men among them, evidently 'magsmen' or 'pickpockets.' It is true, strange as it may appear, that these classes keep very distinct. They rarely fraternise ; the one class, I suppose, feeling the pride of ability and rank, and the other being conscious of their inferior position. I was, therefore, surprised at finding the two classes together. It was evident that a common interest or danger had brought them there. Three or four ordered me out, but there was a friendly smile upon several faces. I therefore exclaimed, 'Pretty fellows, indeed, to hold a secret meeting ; why I could not come down the Marylebone-road without hearing about you.' 'Well,' I continued, after a pause, 'You know I'm safe, and I have come to do you a good turn—the best thing one man can do for another.' I was stopped by one of the men, a thorough rough, handing me a copy of the *Times* newspaper. It was dirty and beer-stained. He enquired if that was not a disgrace to the country ? and if I thought men were to be treated without justice, like savages, because they were unfortunate ? and if I didn't think that the man who wrote that ought to be garrotted ? The article in question approved of the severe sentence passed upon some prisoners for street robbery, with violence. I quickly changed the subject by telling them that I had read in French history of a prison in which a blacksmith was kept to rivet fetters upon the limbs of the unfortunate prisoners. They listened with breathless interest to the narrative. I then told them that all men who commit sin 'forge their own fetters,' and so bind themselves to sin and hell. But, I exclaimed in a less solemn tone, 'seven hundred years before Jesus Christ was born, a prophet wrote of him as the great fetter breaker, that he should proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.' I commented upon these words in connexion with Luke iv. 16—20,

for about ten minutes amidst profound silence, and ended by giving them an earnest call to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus. The men seemed subdued, and discussed the difficulty of getting an honest living, after having been convicted. One of them remarked, 'You made a Christian of 'Rattling Bill' (a young man named——.) I told them about his conversion, and the points of several letters I received from him and from the chaplain of Dartmoor Convict Establishment, of his enlisting as a soldier, and his happy death in India. This was another matter of interest, so I stayed for more than an hour. At leaving, several followed me out, and walked part of the way home with me. I gave my address, and am glad to add that I received visits from three of them. One, who had not been convicted, though charged, has enlisted into the army; and another called to tell me that he had obtained work at a wharf. In each of these cases there seemed to be deep religious impressions. I cannot, with certainty, say more."

It will be seen, from what has been already stated, that for this peculiar work, the greatest prudence and the utmost possible ingenuity are pre-requisites. These must be partly natural gifts. Quickly to seize hold of opportune moments, to keep a sharp lookout for any passing event or incident that may introduce some portion of scriptural teaching, and to do this so surreptitiously as not to lash the conceited and the sceptical into fury, and so simply as not to be above the comprehension of the most muddled and fuddled intellect, is the distinctive work of the eight missionaries employed by the City Mission in this department of Christian labour. Take some cases. The Bermondsey missionary was once amused by two soldiers, one of whom seriously advised the order to "open his mouth and shut his eyes, to see what God would send him." The soldier was fool enough to close his eyes, and open his good-sized mouth. In the twinkling of an eye, the missionary stepped up, and thrust a tract in the stupid fellow's mouth, observing that there was more probability of God's sending him that, than that he should have sent what his comrade was about to give him. And so, this tract and incident formed a suitable introduction to a conversation on the bread of heaven. The news of the day necessarily forms the staple topic of discourse in public-houses. When any great event occurs, it is the universal subject of conversation in beer-houses. After the wreck of the "London," some men in Bethnal Green refused to receive the missionary's tracts, on the ground of their unbelief in the efficacy of prayer. "Were not the sailors all praying?" observed one of the men, "but God did not hear or answer, for the ship went

down, and they were all drowned; and I have been ill for two years, and praying for health all the time, but I am no better, so I think I will give over praying." "There are so many religions—which are we to believe?" is a question often put, and the missionary who quotes and comments on the Saviour's own words, "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," will be more likely to satisfactorily answer the question than if he were to talk to them about the distinctive peculiarities of Protestantism, or of any section of the Protestant church. When in February, 1864, the execution took place at Old Bailey of five pirates, a publican said to one of the missionaries, "Let us have a lecture on capital punishment, for we very much need it from the the appearance outside." This afforded an opportunity for the proclamation of the great truths of the Cross, and the vicarious death thereon of the Lord. "We don't believe in God," observed a publican in the west end. "Oh," replied the missionary, pointing to a jug of flowers—

"No God! no God! the simplest flower
That in the wild is found,
Shrinks as it drinks its cup of dew,
And trembles at the sound."

"There is a God, my friend—a flower-maker and a star-maker, and in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he raised from the dead." "You're a good chap, and no gammon," remarked a rough-looking fellow. "Ah, if that's true," answered the missionary, "I was'n't so once; if I show the portrait of the kind of character I was before God saved me, you would say, 'He is a bad chap, and no gammon.'" And so, there followed a short discourse on man's condition by nature, and the contrast—man saved by divine grace.

We will briefly epitomise some of the remarkable cases which the missionaries have reported to the *City Mission Magazine*. One missionary can report the change of life of three hundred souls, and although some have gone back into "the beggarly elements of the world," he rejoices that "a number of his mission children," are walking in the truth. One stout-willed, contemptuous landlord, who had made a small fortune at the Australian gold-diggings, amused himself at the missionary's expense whenever he visited his bar.

One Sunday, in the midst of the derision which was being heaped upon the messenger of good tidings, a lamplighter was observed to light a lamp at the door, and to walk in the bar room and call for "a pint." The missionary, who was in want of an illustration, immediately pointed towards the new comer, and observed, "I'm in that line of business." "Indeed! how is that?" He was not only obtained a light in his lamp there, but he runs about with his ladder over his shoulder, lighting up all the dark lamps in the street. Well, the Saviour of the world has called out hearts lamps. Some men are wise, and get the light of salvation in them, others are foolish, and walk in darkness. Now, when I'm in obtaining spiritual light he becomes a 'light bearer, and this is why I have come in here, to give each of you the glorious light of the gospel of Christ.' The men listened, so did the landlord. The Holy Spirit's work of regeneration was the topic, the Holy Spirit's power was felt, and the landlord, once so sturdy and derisive, was influenced by a supernatural conviction that changed the current of his thoughts. For some time he struggled against the miserable evils of his trade. He closed his house on the Sabbath. He declined to serve drunkards. He proposed giving up business, but ere his plans were perfected, he was seized with disease, from which he suffered for many months. His sickness aided his spiritual growth. His spiritual growth impelled him for heaven. He died a believer, and his wife lived to manifest "like precious faith." Similar cases might be mentioned, cases in which the closing of the beer house on the Sunday has been the precursor of the greatest gain—the hope of heaven. One landlord gave up Sunday trading, and found the Sabbath a rich possession. And now "his wife and grown up daughters confess Christ, and by their lives give evidence of a work of grace." Take another instance of conversion through public house visitation. One of the agents, in visiting a public house, met with an aged man, who had the appearance of a gentleman, in the parlour —

"A pleasant remark was made about his lovely position, and I asked permission 'to put the question to him which a great King who sat upon the throne of the Pharaohs once put to an aged man who was led up to his throne. He smiled and said, 'Certainly.' 'Well, then I continued, 'how old art thou? Eighty-four,' he replied. 'That,' I added 'is not so good an answer as good old Jacob gave, he said that his days had been few, but of many sorrows, has it not been so with you?' 'It has,' he answered. 'But,' I continued, 'he called life the

days of the years of his pilgrimage—has yours been a pilgrimage to the better country? As I spoke the tears trickled down his cheeks, and he replied, 'That is my trouble; my life has been prosperous, and I have an ample fortune, but for some years past I have felt crushed under the weight of my sins. I know that my days are few, and at times I am so unhappy that I leave home and wander about. That was the case this morning and I felt weary as I passed here, and as no one was in the parlour I stepped in for a glass of sherry.' This he had before him. He gave anxious heed while I dwelt upon the meaning of the Saviour's sweetest name, 'even Jesus,' and told him about the Father's love. Several rough men came in, and we rose to leave. He then offered me his hand, and said, 'Do let me see you again, sir; come and dine with me.' I promised to call upon him, and we exchanged cards. Since then I have seen him frequently, and I have sought his salvation with much conversation and prayer. Upon a recent visit he received me with a smile, and said, 'Oh! Mr. W——, I have cast all upon the Saviour, and can now say, 'Lord lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' I continue to visit him, and I believe that he is saved.'

We might go on with such instances—our patience is not exhausted—but our space is already filled. We might give instances of conversions of landlords who have, for conscience sake, given up their businesses, and sacrificed much for principles for which no sacrifice can be too great, of drunkards who have dashed away the temptation, and accounted it for ever accursed, of harlots who have been rescued even in the midst of the bewitching enchantments of gaiety; of infidels who have turned from the intoxications of self conceit, and have humbled themselves under the simple verities of the gospel; of sailors who, scarce landed on shore, have, by divine grace, abandoned the infatuations of passion, and sought the soberer and more enduring joys of a life of faith, of the conversion of those who but for the criminal fastidiousness of those who should have warned them, might long ago have turned from the corrupting paths of licentiousness—Young men who have been caught up in the whirlpool of London fast life, and who after a round of false pleasures have been mercifully delivered from the torture-room of abused outraged nature, in which room "Nature casts down the wretch, searches every vein, makes a road of every nerve for the scorching feet of pain to travel on, pulls at every muscle, breaks in the breast, builds fires in the brain, eats out the skin, and casts living coals of torment on the heart." Let the agonies witnessed in hospitals where the victims of gaiety ooze out the remnant of a sin-besotted life, be a justification

more than sufficient for missionary operations among those who, entangled by vice, must, but for the mercy and restraints of heaven, go down from the strange woman's house through the corridor of hell, even to "the chambers of death."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SEVEN EVILS OF LONDON.

The first of the seven evils of London is "*neglected children*." Well may the writer call it a startling fact, that in England and Wales, three hundred and fifty thousand children, under the age of sixteen, are dependent more or less on parish authorities for maintenance; in London alone, one hundred thousand children wander in destitution, preparing for the gaols or for the early graves. Children of the gutter, their food is scant, their lodging foul, their clothing ragged. Even when blessed with a mother, the young Arabs neither fare sumptuously by night nor by day. Cradled in a gooseberry sieve, or nestled in an egg box, the babies of the poorest class have no injurious luxury to enervate them. Strange facts came under my own observation. "Accompanied by a friend, I was on a visit of exploration into the little-known regions of Baldwin's Gardens, in Leather Lane, and entering a cellar there, the family who occupied it were discovered in a state of dreadful commotion. The mother, a tall, bony, ragged shrew, had a baby tucked under one arm, while she was using the other by the aid of a pair of dilapidated nozzleless bellows in inflicting a tremendous beating on a howling young gentleman of about eleven years old. 'Tut! tut! what is the matter, Mrs. Donelly? Rest your arm a moment, now, and tell us all about it.' 'Mather! shure it's matther enough to dhrive a poor widdy beyant her senses!' And then her rage turning to sorrow, she in pathetic terms described how that she left that bad boy Johnny only for a few moments in charge of the 'darlint comfortable ashleap in her bashket,' and that he had neglected his duty, and that the baste of a donkey had smelt her out, and 'ate her clane out o' bed.' . . . It was not long after the incident of the gooseberry sieve, that I discovered in one small room in which a family of six resided, three little children, varying in age from three to eight, perhaps,

stark naked. It was noon of a summer's day, and there they were nude as forest monkeys, and so hideously dirty that every rib-bone in their poor wasted little bodies showed plain, and in colour like mahogany. Soon as I put my head in at the door they scattered, scared as rabbits, to the 'bed,' an arrangement of evil-smelling flock and old potato-sacks, and I was informed by the mother that they had not a rag to wear, and had been in their present condition for *more than three months.*"

Had the stories told of the food of little Arab hordes in London streets been narrated by a missionary as being true of Chinese or Patagonians, our hair would be on end with horror; but many will read the following with complacency. "They draw a considerable amount of their sustenance from the markets. And really it would seem that by some miraculous dispensation of Providence, garbage was for their sake robbed of its poisonous properties, and endowed with virtues such as wholesome food possesses. Did the reader ever see the young market hunters at such a 'feed,' say in the month of August or September? It is a spectacle to be witnessed only by early risers who can get as far as Covent Garden by the time that the wholesale dealing in the open falls slack—which will be about eight o'clock; and it is not to be believed unless it is seen. They will gather about a muck heap and gobble up plums, a sweltering mass of decay, and oranges and apples that have quite lost their original shape and colour, with the avidity of ducks or pigs. I speak according to my knowledge, for I have seen them at it. I have seen one of these gaunt wolfish little children with his tattered cap full of plums of a sort one of which I would not have permitted a child of mine to eat for all the money in the Mint.

Very painful are the results of enquiries into the parentage of these "rank-outsiders" of humanity, these wretched waifs and strays of the race; and if possible, even worse are the revelations concerning the baby-farming, and other forms by which certain of these poor little souls are reared, or rather, murdered wholesale. Advertisements for nurse children, and for babes to be adopted, mean a great deal more than unsuspecting readers have usually imagined. How many babes have passed into eternity through the "ha'p'orth of bread and a ha'p'orth of milk a-day" system, eternity alone can reveal. No longer need we wonder at the large proportion of infantile

mortality. But what unnatural, brutal sin does all this mean! How must God be provoked as he sees *his* children deserted of their parents, *his* babes left as beasts leave not their young! Should these poor creatures live, and become bread-winners on their own account, they do but escape the ogres to fall into the way of harpies equally as vile. The amusements provided for the youth of London are many of them such as Sodom could have never excelled for their depravity. The low theatre, and the penny gaff, are simply open doors to hell; they smell of Tophet, and this makes them none the less profitable. "Now that the police are to be roused to increased vigilance in the suppression, as well as the arrest of criminality, it would be as well if those in authority directed their especial attention to these penny theatres. As they at present exist, they are nothing better than hot-beds of vice in its vilest forms. Girls and boys of tender age are herded together to witness the splendid achievements of 'dashing highwaymen,' and of sirens of the Starlight Sall School; nor is this all. But bad as this is, it is really the least part of the evil. The penny 'gaff' is usually a small place, and when a specially atrocious piece produces a corresponding 'run,' the 'house' is incapable of containing the vast number of boys and girls who nightly flock to see it. Scores would be turned away from the doors, and their halfpence wasted, were it not for the worthy proprietor's ingenuity. I am now speaking of what I was an actual witness of in the neighbourhood of Shoreditch. Beneath the pit and stage of the theatre was a sort of large kitchen, reached from the end of the passage that was the entrance to the theatre, by a flight of steep stairs. There were no seats in this kitchen, nor furniture of any kind. There was a window looking toward the street, but this was prudently boarded up. At night time all the light allowed in the kitchen proceeded from a feeble and dim gas jet by the wall over the fire-place.

"Wretched and dreary-looking as was this underground chamber, it was a source of considerable profit to the proprietor of the 'gaff' over-head. As before stated, when anything peculiarly attractive was to be seen, the theatre filled within ten minutes of opening the besieged doors. Not to disappoint the late comers, however, all who pleased might pay and go down-stairs until the performance just commenced (it lasted generally about an hour and a-half) terminated.

The prime inducement held out was, that 'then they would be sure of good seats.' The inevitable result of such an arrangement may be easier guessed than described. For my part, I know no more about it than was to be derived from a hasty glance from the stair-head. There was a stench of tobacco smoke, and an uproar of mingled youthful voices—swearing, chaffing, and screaming, in boisterous mirth. This was all that was to be heard, the Babel charitably rendering distinct pronouncing of blasphemy or indecency unintelligible. Nor was it much easier to make out the source from whence the hideous clamour proceeded, for the kitchen was dim as a coal cellar, and was further obscured by the foul tobacco smoke the lads were emitting from their short pipes. A few were romping about—'larking,' as it is termed—but the majority, girls and boys, were squatted on the floor, telling and listening to stories, the quality of which might but too truly be guessed from the sort of applause they elicited. A few—impatient of the frivolity that surrounded them, and really anxious for 'the play'—stood apart, gazing with scowling envy up at the ceiling, on the upper side of which, at frequent intervals, there was a furious clatter of hobnailed boots, betokening the delirious delight of the happy audience in full view of Starlight Sall, in 'silk tights' and Hessians, dancing a Highland fling. Goaded to desperation, one or two of the tormented ones down in the kitchen reached up with their sticks and beat on the ceiling a tattoo, responsive to the battering of the hobnailed boots before mentioned. This, however, was a breach of 'gaff' rule that could not be tolerated."

In the chamber of horrors the second door admits us to a view of *professional thieves*, an army, at least, twenty thousand strong. Think of that! remembering that this number is little short of the membership of all the Baptist churches in London; and painfully reflecting that every individual member of this synagogue of Satan is an earnest, genuine worker in the evil cause. If this vast and valiant host comprehended all the villainy of London the plague would be deep and horrible enough; but, alas! the infection of dishonesty taints all classes of the community, and honesty is almost as rare as in those days when the prophet complained that the best of them was "as a thorn-hedge."

Professional beggars figure in the third department; and from our own large and troublesome experience we can more than confirm

many of Mr. Greenwood's statements. That there are beggars in London whose poverty is pitiable, and who richly deserve assistance, we know ; but that mendicancy is with thousands a profitable trade, a resort for the idle and the vicious, we are equally certain. Mere singing in the street, squatting down in theatrical destitution on a doorstep, or exhibiting sham sores are old and 'timeworn dodges, which are but poorly remunerative ; but the begging-letter dodge, the newspaper scheme, and other delicate processes of imposture, are still profitable speculations, and support an army of the vilest loafers that ever disgraced a city.

On the fourth point, the curse of *fallen women* we confess to be widely at variance with Mr. Greenwood's statements. We deprecate from the bottom of our hearts the idea of licensing prostitution. The French method, so far from having their admiration of the English people, excites their loathing. May God avert from England the abiding pestilence of systematic debauchery, by which sin is made easy, and the path to hell more fascinating than ever. Yet England's social evil is intolerable in its present shape, and something must be done to repress it.

The crowning curse is *drunkenness*, which indeed is related to all the others, and is often their mother and always their nurse. Here it is not possible for the subject to be too highly wrought. We have heard it avowed of Mr. Greenwood that he colours a subject quite sufficiently, and is no mean proficient in the imaginative, but in his volume we see no evidence to substantiate the charge, perhaps because the fault was impossible. The liquor served out for public consumption at the gin-palaces, beer-houses, and drinking bars, if all be true, would defile the foulest kennel ; and if the whole stock were poured out into Barking Creek it would be well. Ordinary hard drinking does quite mischief enough without the added horror of the fact that men and women swallow seas of disgusting mixtures in which coculus indicus, foxglove, green copperas, hartshorn shavings, henbane, jalap, nut galls, nux vomica, opium, vitriol, potash, quassia, yew-tops, and alum, are the choicer ingredients. No wonder the toppers grow mad drunk, the marvel is they do not die outright. It ought to need no persuasion to induce men totally to abstain from such abominations as the beers and porters, the wines and spirits, of most of the licensed poison-shops.

* This demon of drink must be fought, for it swallows men by thousands, makes their homes wretched, their children paupers, and their souls the prey of the devil. There should be combined and vigorous action among all temperate men for such a control of licenses that the dens of drunkenness should be made far less numerous. The Englishmen unmistakably overdone with gin-palaces and beer-houses; they are thrust upon them at every street-corner; they are multiplied beyond all pretence of demand. Not the public good but the publican's good appears to be the aim of the licensers. Quiet neighbourhoods cannot spring up because the beer-house rises simultaneously; or if such a thing should for a few months be seen under heaven as a sober region, universally respectable, and guiltless of intoxication, the Bacchanalian missionary soon opens his temple and converts the population to the common error of drinking ways. It is true, the demand for drink creates the supply, but it is as surely true that the all-surrounding omnipresence of the stimulant suggests, and propagates the craving. At any rate, no two opinions can exist upon one point, namely, that the accursed habit of intoxication lies at the root of the main part of London's poverty, misery, and crime.

Betting gamblers, in the sixth place, come in for their share of Mr. Greenwood's condemnation. "There can be no doubt that the vice of gambling is on the increase amongst the English working-classes. Of this no better proof is afforded than in the modern multiplication of those newspapers specially devoted to matters 'sportive.' Twenty years ago there were three or four sporting newspapers published in London; now there are more than a dozen."

Those who occupy the highest ranks of the social scale have the fearful responsibility of rendering gambling fashionable, and their example has had its influence upon all ranks, until even children bet their shillings and the lads of the gutter cry the odds. A tribe of "prophets," blacklegs, and advertisers, feed upon this growing vice, swarming about it like flies around carrion. Marvellous are the fortunes to be made by "putting on" a few pounds, and rich are the promised gains of even a dozen postage stamps, staked upon the horse whose name will be communicated upon the receipt of a fee; more marvellous still is the senseless folly which can be duped by such manifest quackery.

his pale haggard face and his dull eyes, out of which nothing but weariness of life looked. He was a tall slim young fellow, and wore his patched and seedy clothes as though he had been used to better attire; and, despite the tell-tale shabbiness of his boots and his wretched tall black hat, he still clung to the respectable habit of wearing black kid-gloves, though it was necessary to shut his fists to hide the dilapidations at their finger-tips.

"He was not remarkable amongst the betting blackguards he mingled with on account of the active share he took in the questionable business in which they were engaged; on the contrary, he seemed quite out of place with them, and though occasionally one would patronise him with a nod, it was evident that he was 'nothing to them,' either as a comrade or a gull to be plucked. He appeared to be drawn towards them by a fascination he could not resist, but which he deplored and was ashamed of. It was customary in those times for the prosperous horse-betting gambler to affect the genteel person who could afford to keep a 'man,' and to press into his service some poor ragged wretch glad to earn a sixpence by wearing his master's 'card of terms' round his neck for the inspection of any person inclined to do business. The tall shabby young fellow's chief occupation consisted in wandering restlessly from one of these betting-card bearers to another, evidently with a view to comparing 'prices' and 'odds' offered on this or that horse; but he never bet. I don't believe that his pecuniary affairs would have permitted him, even though a bet as low as twopence-halfpenny might be laid.

"I was always on the look-out for my miserable-looking young friend whenever I passed that way, and seldom failed to find him. He seemed to possess for me a fascination something like that which horse-betting possessed for him. One afternoon, observing him alone and looking even more miserable than I had yet seen him, as he slouched along the miry pavement towards Holborn, I found means to start a conversation with him. My object was to learn who and what he was, and whether he was really as miserable as he looked, and whether there was any help for him. I was prepared to exercise all the ingenuity at my command to compass this delicate project, but he saved me the trouble. As though he was glad of the chance of doing so, before we were half-way up Holborn-hill he turned the conversation exactly into the desired groove, and by the time the

Tottenham-road was reached (he turned down there), I knew even more of his sad history than is here subjoined.

“What is the business pursuit that takes me amongst the betting-men? Oh! no, sir, I’m not at all astonished that you should ask the question; I’ve asked it of myself so often, that it doesn’t come new to me. I pursue no business, sir. What business *could* a wretched scare-crow like I am pursue? Say that I am pursued, and you will be nearer the mark: Pursued by what I can never get away from or shake off.”

“He uttered a concluding wicked word with such decisive and bitter emphasis, that I began to think that he had done with the subject; but he began again almost immediately.

“I wish to the Lord I had a business pursuit! If ever a fellow was tired of his life, I am. Well—yes, I *am* a young man; but, it’s precious small consolation that that fact brings me. Hang it, no! All the longer to endure it. How long have I endured it? Ah, now you come to the point. For years, you think, I daresay. You look at me, and you think to yourself, “There goes a poor wretch who has been on the downhill road so long that it’s time that he came to the end of it, or made an end to it.” There you are mistaken. Eighteen months ago I was well dressed and prosperous. I was second clerk to——, the provision merchants, in St. Mary Axe, on a salary of a hundred and forty pounds—rising twenty each year. Now look at me!”

“You need not ask me how it came about. You say that you have seen me often in Farringdon-street with the betting-men, so you can give a good guess as to how I came to ruin, I’ll be bound. Yes, sir, it is horse-betting that did my business. No, I did not walk to ruin with my eyes open, and because I liked the road. I was trapped into it, sir, as I’ll be bound scores and scores of young fellows have been. I never had a passion for betting. I declare that, till within the last two years, I never made a bet in my life. The beginning of it was that for the fun of the thing, I wagered ten shillings with a fellow-clerk about the Derby that was just about to come off. I never took any interest in horse-racing before: but when I had made that bet I was curious to look over the sporting news, and to note the odds against the favourite. One unlucky day I was fool enough to answer the advertisement of a professional tipster. He keeps the game going

still, curse him ! You may read his name in the papers this morning. If I wasn't such an infernal coward, you know, I should kill that man. If I hadn't the money to buy a pistol, I ought to steal one, and shoot the thief. But, what do you think ? I met him on Monday, and he chaffed me about my boots. It was raining at the time. "I wish I had a pair of waterproofs like yours, Bobby. You'll never take cold while they let all the water out at the heel they take in at the toe !" Fancy me standing *that* after the way he had served me ! Fancy this too—me borrowing a shilling of him, and saying, Thank you, sir, for it ! Why, you know, I ought to be pumped on for doing it !

"Yes, I wrote to "Robert B—y, Esq., of Leicester," and sent the half-crown's worth of stamps asked for. It doesn't matter what I got in return. Anyhow, it was something that set my mind on betting, and I wrote again and again. At first his replies were of a distant and business-sort ; but in a month or so after I had written to him to complain of being misguided by him, he wrote back a friendly note to say that he wasn't at all surprised to hear of my little failures—novices always did fail. They absurdly attempt what they did not understand. "Just to show you the difference," said he, "just give me a commission to invest a pound for you on the Ascot Cup. All that I charge is seven and-a-half per cent. on winnings. Try it just for once ; a pound won't break you, and it may open your eyes to the way that fortunes are made." I ought to have known then, that either he, or somebody in London he had set on, had been making enquiries about me, for the other notes were sent to where mine were directed from—my private lodgings—but this one came to me at the warehouse.

"Well, I sent the pound, and within a week received a post-office order for four pounds eight as the result of its investment. The same week I bet again—two pounds this time—and won one pound fifteen. That was over six pounds between Monday and Saturday. "This is the way that fortunes are made," I laughed to myself, like a fool.

"Well, he kept me going, I don't exactly recollect how, between Ascot and Goodwood, which is about seven weeks, not more. Sometimes I won, sometimes I lost, but, on the whole, I was in pocket. I was such a fool at last, that I was always for betting more than he

a dvised. I've got his letters at home now, in which he says, "Pray don't be rash; take my advice, and bear in mind that great risks mean great losses, as well as great gains, at times." Quite fatherly, you know! The scoundrel!

"Well, one day there came a telegram to the office for me. I was just in from my dinner. It was from B—y. "Now you may bag a hundred pounds at a shot," said he. "The odds are short but the result *certain*. Never mind the money just now. You are a gentleman, and I will trust you. You know that my motto has all along been 'Caution.' Now it is 'Go in and win.' It is *sure*." Send me a word immediately, or it may be too late; and, if you see wise, put a 'lump' on it."

"That was the infernal document—the death warrant of all my good prospects. It was the rascal's candour that deceived me. He had all along said, "Be cautious, don't be impatient to launch out;" and now this patient careful villain saw his chance, and advised, "Go in and win." I was quite in a maze at the prospect of bagging a hundred pounds. To win that sum the odds were so short on the horse he mentioned, that fifty pounds had to be risked. But he said that there was no *risk*, and I believed him. I sent him back a telegram at once to execute the commission.

"The horse lost. I knew it next morning before I was up, for I had sent for the newspaper; and while I was in the midst of my fright, up comes my landlady to say that a gentleman of the name of B—y wished to see me.

"I had never seen him before, and he seemed an easy fellow enough. He was in a terrible way—chiefly on my account—though he never only knew how much he had lost over the 'sell.' He had come up by express purely to relieve my anxiety, knowing how 'funky' young gentlemen sometimes were over such trifles. Although he had really paid the fifty in hard gold out of his pocket, he was in no hurry for it. He would take my bill at two months. It would be all right, no doubt. He had conceived a liking for me, merely from my straightforward way of writing. Now that he had had the pleasure of seeing me, he shouldn't trouble himself a fig if the fifty that I owed him was five hundred.

"I declare to you that I knew so little about bills, that I didn't know how to draw one out; but I was mighty glad to be shown the

way and to give it him, and thank him over and over again for his kindness. That was the beginning of my going to the bad. If I hadn't been a fool, I might have saved myself even then, for I had friends who would have lent or given me twice fifty pounds if I had asked them for it. But I *was* a fool. In the course of a day or two I got a note from B—y, reminding me that the way out of the difficulty was by the same path as I had got into one, and that a little judicious 'backing' would set me right before even my bill fell due. And I was fool enough to walk into the snare. I wouldn't borrow to pay the fifty pounds, but I borrowed let and right, of my mother, of my brothers, on all manner of lying pretences, to follow the 'advice' B—y was constantly sending me. When I came to the end of their forbearance, I did more than borrow; but that we won't speak of. In five months from the beginning, I was without a relative who would owe me or speak to me, and without an employer—cocked my snuff at me. And here B—y, as I said before, with his white forelock, waved his hand of his head, and his gold toothpick, chaffing me about my old boots. "What do I do for a living? Well, I've told you such a precious lot, I may as well tell you that too. Where I lodge it's a 'leaving shop,' and the old woman that keeps it can't read or write, and I keep her 'book' for her. That's how I get a bit of breakfast and supper and a bed to lie on."

We have little space and less heart to take up the seventh curse, *the waste of charity*; but we must conclude with entreating the tearful prayers of all God's people for the wicked city; by exhorting all lovers of truth and righteousness to bestir themselves.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DUSTWOMEN.

ONE of the oddest things in connection with woman's work is the arbitrary distinction that is drawn between work that is womanly and work that is not. To be a nurse is womanly enough even in the estimation of those who regard a lady doctor as a woman who has lost her sex, and most people who are scandalized at the unwomanliness of the woman who lectures or preaches see nothing unseemly in the posturing of an actress in male attire before the footlights. It is therefore in accordance with precedent that while good

people are shocked at the very idea of women doing well-paid work monopolized by men, they regard it as a matter of course that as scavengers and dustwomen they should do the roughest, and coarsest, and most repulsive work that falls to the share of the toilers of our day. There is no work too foul or too severe to which a woman may not be put—provided always it is not too well paid.

According to the latest Census returns the number of dust-women is 1,403 in England and Wales. Of these the majority live in the heart of the metropolis, in the City, at Paddington, at Lambeth, and in all the poor quarters close to the canals, on both sides of which the large dust-yards abound. Their number is diminishing. The dust contractors have of late years introduced machinery, and the machine has superseded the woman. "It was a bad day some sixteen years ago," said one of the hoar-voiced women, who, with weather-beaten face and dishevelled hair, stood in her doorway, behind her the blackness of a tumbledown stairs in a house at Paddington, "it was a bad day when the first machine was put up in yonder yard," pointing to one of the entrances to the wharf opposite. "Until the very day it began to work 150 women were employed in that place all the year round, but when that rattling thing first began its noise all were dismissed except twelve, who were and still are kept on." The "dusters" are strictly conservative as regards machinery, the few who are at work in yards where machinery is employed of course excepted. The latter have the easiest work and the best wages; they themselves as well as their places are several shades more respectable than the rest, and they look down in contempt on "them yards," where still, her short pipe in mouth, the dustwoman does her work in sackcloth and ashes, enlivened by the occasional "drop" so dear to thirsty souls. The large carts of refuse collected from the millions of London dustbins are brought into the dustyards and massed into high heaps in front of the canal, sufficient space, and no more, being left for the women to stand on the edge of the canal. A boy or girl is posted on the heap, shovelling with a large spade the refuse into the sieve which each woman holds before her, when the shout "serve" demands attention. The sieve filled, the dustwoman shakes it, and as the dust falls through she sorts it. Who could enumerate the thousand different articles that find their way into the dustbins of London?

With lightning rapidity, she picks them out and throws them sorted into the different baskets at her back. People often wonder how all the host of tradesmen get rid of their goods. A look at the cart-loads of old kitchen utensils, broken glass and crockery, rags, papers, bones, bread, and a multitude of other things of all descriptions, which are day after day taken out of all dustyards, will enlighten them on that point. Each and all of them are used for some purpose, and the value of one large dustheap—unsorted—is said to be as much as £ 4,000 or £ 5,000. When the cinders and ashes are all that remain on the sieve, the cinders are thrown on one side, the ashes fall through, and the sieves are emptied. This goes on hour after hour all day long, until the woman stands up to her knees in a pyramid of damp ashes, which are removed to the barges on the canal when the heap grows high enough to cause inconvenience to the sifter. In cases where the sifting is done by machinery, the women have only to sort the articles, which is much cleaner work. In some cases the women are allowed to take a certain quantity of wood and cinders for firing away to their homes, the value being deducted from the wages; otherwise they are strictly forbidden to appropriate any of the articles that find their way into the sieves. Should a woman be fortunate enough to find a pair of boots that might do for a member of her family, or a “bit o’ flannel” not yet beyond recovery, she applies to the foreman of the yard, and is generally allowed to retain her treasure. Small coins are also frequently found. “Often,” I was told, “I find two or three half-pence on a morning, which go to buy the childer a loaf, but then it is weeks before I find another coin.” The mythical tales about bank-notes and plate being found in the dust are ridiculed by the women.

The average weekly wages of a dustwoman are ten to eleven shillings. For this she works from half-past six in the morning till five at night, with three-quarters of an hour for meals. In summer, when the majority of dust-producing Londoners are out of town, and when the poor people do not use much fire, the business is slack, and in many yards the women work only half-time. The best time is when days are dark, foggy, and cold; then a rich harvest is brought into the yards, and the woman rolls up her sleeves a little higher than usual, thrusts an old sack over her shoulders,

puts on the lightest pair of navvie's boots that she can get, and plunges into her work. She is not a picturesque spectacle as the rain drips from her face and hair on the coal-crust of her arms, leaving little rills of flesh colour in the pitch-black surface. But trying as the work may appear to the uninitiated, there are few emale workers who can boast of more robust health than these women of the dustyards. Their features may be swollen by drink, or brutalized by immorality, but there are no sickly faces to be seen among them, for weak women could not stand the work. The age of the dustwoman ranges from fourteen years to above sixty. Of the latter there are not a few, and the old ladies are the liveliest of the party, raising with pointed speech many a roar of laughter and approval. Most of the women, however, are middle-aged, with a large, increasing family at their homes, such as they are. If there is a girl of ten to twelve among the children, the rest are left in her care till she is old enough to begin work in the yard; if there is no elder child, the small children are put under the care of another woman, who is paid by the week. The question, "Why do you not let your daughter go to service or try to get some cleaner work?" is invariably answered by "The girls like this better." "They are out in the air all the day; can do what they like when they get home; and if they go into factories their wages are no better, and they have to work as hard, and harder, at unhealthily work."

Concerning the homes of these "fairies," as they are called, it is the old story. Whole families of six or seven—parents, grown-up sons and daughters, young children, and babies—all live and sleep in one small room, where day after day a fire is kept up, where the air is foul within and pestilential without. But few among the dustwomen can think of keeping their little hovel decent; when work is over at five o'clock—and, though healthy, they all admit that it is "dragging" work—they come home to a room full of hungry children, who all must be satisfied. The husband also has to be attended to; there are "rags" to wash and mend, the dinner for next day has to be cooked, and it is no wonder that there is but rarely an hour left for the necessary cleaning. Until recently the reputation of the "dust people" has been such that few decent visitors come near them; but of late the London City Mission has taken them under its charge, and its agents, who carry on their

work with steadiness and perseverance, are satisfied with the small but sure results they have attained.

CHAPTER XIX.

PREACHING IN A LOW LODGING HOUSE.

"Oh, yes, sir, shall be werry happy for you to talk to 'em," said the proprietor of a common lodging house one wintry Sabbath evening to a friend who had applied for permission to preach in the large kitchen of his house.

The man who had so graciously given this permission was a short, thick-set, not altogether unpleasant looking personage, who seemed to be far removed from the coarse-grained characters who belong to these dens. "I knew you would," replied my friend cheerfully, "and I am always indebted to you for allowing my helpers to come in on the Sunday evening."

"So we walked into the kitchen. It was a dark, dreary, oblong room on the ground-floor of the house. In the neighbourhood it is known as "THE GREAT HELL," and not far from it is a smaller kitchen which is recognised as "The Little Hell." But for the large bright coke fire that was burning so pleasantly, and the cheerful-looking oil lamp placed on the high, old-fashioned, dirt-encrusted mantelpiece, it would be utterly impossible to remain for a moment in the kitchen without receiving hideous impressions that could only be described by some Dantean pen. You felt, as it was, a mental depression which rendered you almost unfitted for the exercise of worship. There was a window at each end of the room, but both were closed and fenced with shutters. The current of fresh air so necessary to sweep the objectionable odours away, was obtained by means of an open door, which formed the subject of my companion's discourse: "Behold, I set before you an open door, which no man can shut." Rev. iii. 8. As we were entering, two females were applying themselves to their toilet, and another was with commendable vigour, paying attention to that virtue which is next to godliness. What must have been the colour of the face of one of the (shail we say) FAIR sex prior to the ablution, it is impossible to say; but had we not observed the performance of the deed, we might have concluded that a long divorce had been established between the face

and the soap and towel. A somewhat younger woman, who had the appearance of a hopeless harlot, though discoloured by a terribly black eye, managed to put in a clean appearance, and despite her sin, she was not altogether ill-looking. We approached the fire, took a seat in front of it, and announced the purpose of our visit. Around this farmhouse fire were seated on forms about a dozen men and women, while half-a-dozen little ragged, shoeless, barely-clad boys were rolling over each other, and using horribly bad language. At the mention of the proposal to sing, they assumed a quiet demeanour, and while the words were being given out, they merely winked at each other. The tune selected was the well-known "Home, sweet home," and as if in direct satire, two of the boys persisted in singing the words of the ditty in place of the hymn. You could not but pity the poor little urchins; since the den in which they lived could scarcely with decency be termed a "home," much less a "sweet home." The singing brought in about eight or nine more persons, including an aged man with a young girl, whose condition was "interesting" in a sense which seemed perfectly unnatural for one so youthful. It is said of Robertson of Brighton, that he never saw a leering scoundrel who tracked the steps of a virtuous woman without feeling an instinctive desire to knock him down. I confess to having had some such feeling toward that old man, who seemed to be the wretch who had beclouded the fair prospects of the interesting girl. My friend read to this strange congregation, the ever acceptable story of the Prodigal Son, and though the weirdlike scene in this modern pandemonium was painful enough to strangle the attempt in its infancy, yet he succeeded in interesting them in that famous parable. But the prayer which followed seemed to be a mystery to the young urchins, who, though for a time adopting the plan of the mistress of the house in putting their hands before their eyes, yet opened their fingers and laughed at each other most irreverently. One of the lads tickled another under his feet, and it was with difficulty the giggling could be suppressed. It need hardly be said that the prayer was short, and we can vouch for it that it was none the less fervent and direct. The singing was dispensed with, since few had joined in the first hymn, and it was deemed advisable not to tire the poor creatures by a lengthy or ordinary service. So the preaching began. My friend who addressed them is a model of what might be termed a business-

like preacher : he is eminently practical, and knowing that the ordinary talk of common life is best comprehended by the "roughs," he addresses, he aims at presenting the truth in just such a light as will be most likely to engage their thoughtful attention. On this occasion he succeeded admirably. His similes, illustrations, and stories, were simple and forcible, and were evidently both understood and appreciated by the majority of those who listened. "Now," said he, "I shall talk to you for a few minutes from this text, 'Behold, I set before you an open door, which no man can shut.' The first word is 'behold.' A short time ago, the scientific world uttered the word 'Behold !' and many anxious eyes were up-turned to the skies. Nor were they unrewarded ; for across the vault of heaven, a multitude of brilliant meteors were seen to dart, until they were lost in the mysterious depths of the blue ether. But there were some who heeded not the injunction of the astronomer ; whilst others watched, they slept, and consequently lost a scene very beautiful and interesting. The word 'Behold !' in the text is uttered by one whose commands are of greater weight than those of any astronomer ; it is the utterance of Jesus Christ, and demands our prompt and reverent attention." Then the preacher compared the word "Behold !" to a finger-post at the junction of several roads, directing the traveller the way to the city—to the marginal signs in quaint old books, pointing to some important statement—and to a lighthouse at the entrance of a harbour, guiding the tempest-tossed mariner into the haven of rest. Then he examined the figure, and showed how Jesus Christ became the door, and how that door was opened for the vilest of men—

" The door of mercy's open still,
And Jesus cries, ' Whoever will'
By me may enter in ;'
I am the door, and I have died
Salvation's door to open wide
For sinners dead in sin."

No part of this little sermon seemed to gain greater attention than that portion which dealt with the value of an open door. "Have you never," he remarked, "passed the door of a workhouse on a cold, wet, and windy night, and seen the poor hungry and half-naked creatures waiting and watching anxiously for the door to

open, that they may have food and shelter for the night?" Some of the men here nodded to each other, as if to say, "We've been like that!" A series of similar illustrations followed, describing the value of a door when a large crowded building is on fire, like that of Santiago, and how prisoners of war longed for an open door as they looked through their iron gratings on to the green fields in the distance. Then, the characteristics of the door were:—It was *narrow*:

"Those holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame.
None but the followers of the Lamb
Can find admission there."

But it was nevertheless a *wide* door—wide enough for Manasseh, for the dying thief, for the chiefest of sinners. It was, too, the *only* door; therefore, good works, baptism, the Lord's Supper, were not the doors to heaven. It was a *safe* door—the true Noah's ark, within which there is safety amidst earth's stormy tempests. It was a door no man could shut. And the whole concluded with an exhortation to "peep into the open door," just as the little boys peeped in at the open doors of the Great Exhibition, so that they might glance at the glittering objects inside. "Look to Calvary," was the burden of the closing remarks.

I observed that one poor tramp went to sleep, not as the result of the soothing influences of the address, but in consequence of the soporiferous effects produced by the fire in front of him. A lad in corderoys vainly battled against the encroachments of this feeling, and at last succumbed, waking up in time to hear the closing hymn being sung. The adults, among whom in the dark distance the black face of a negro was barely visible, listened with the greatest attention, and at times they threatened to cuff the boys if they did not "drop that 'ere," which, rendered into conventional English, meant, if they refused to keep quiet. At one time the lads grew most unruly. A poor, slim kitten would persist in squatting in front of the fire; and the urchins manifested their affection toward the dumb creature by making round O's of its tail, a process of disfiguration which the kitten did not appreciate. The master of the house exhibited a small cane; the mistress confined pussy in her apron; the naughty little thing, however, did not like her imprisonment,

but mewed for liberty, and dashing through a loophole of retreat, managed to find her way among her tormentors. This scene was repeated several times; and yet the discourse, like a panoramic scroll, full of admirable pictures, glided on. It was preaching under difficulties; but the Good Master helps his servants to conquer them, even when they are most trying. Before leaving the room, an invitation was given to take tea with the preacher in a contiguous mission hall; and as the men did not think we were taking a liberty in inviting them, we were assured of their company.

The tea meeting took place on the 29th of March, and there were about one hundred present, all of whom had been provided with tickets, a few of which it was found had been purchased by costermongers from the members of the lodging houses. These few, however, refused to remain to the evening meeting, while the irrepressible boys persisted in staying and annoying everyone, until they were forcibly ejected. All honour to those brethren who *can* deal with such debased characters; but it need not be a matter of surprise if some of us should shrink from such engagements. The company were asked whether there were any teetotallers among them. Seven of the most reputable held up their hands; but whether their abstinence from intoxicating drinks was a matter of conviction or of sheer necessity arising from poverty cannot be determined. Several acknowledged that they had in former years been scholars in the Sabbath-school. One strong-looking fellow wished to ask a question. Whereupon, an endeavour was made to laugh him down. He, however, appealed to his "mates," by asking whether "the gen'l'm'n" had not invited them to say what they thought. This cooled the vicious ardour of the noisy, and the remainder clamoured for silence by appealing to the "cheer." The man then said that a mate of his who worked with him in the brewery, last week fell into a vat of boiling hops, and was killed. People were sure to say he was drunk 'cos he worked at the beer trade, but he wasn't. There was no guard on the stage; it wasn't by his own "instigation" (? fault) that he fell into the copper. The poor man was a Christian, he was sure, although he had been a blackguard and a thief in his younger days. Now, he wanted to know why God—if he was as merciful as had been said that evening—should let this man die such an awful death? If he loved him, and the man really trusted

in Jesus, why did he allow him to die in that way? The replies that were made satisfied the enquirer, although he seemed to think it strange that God should save the soul, and yet kill the body in so dreadful a way.

One man—a Christian bricklayer—though, as he confessed, quite unaccustomed to public speaking, made an interesting speech, in which he said there were many there that night who knew him and knew what he had been in times gone by. He could be the first in gambling and other acts of wickedness; he used to resort to all the various dodges to get the best of any man as well as any of them, when he had a chance. But that was all changed now, since he had found God. He was a living monument of God's great mercy. The speaker then proceeded most simply and artlessly to beseech them to "try what religion could do for them;" and although he made sorry trips in grammar, and fact, quotation, and sense, saying, at one point, that "God had said he would help them as helps themselves," and so on—yet, without doubt, his address made a good impression. Indeed, for the roughs, no better speakers can be found than those who have, before conversion, been as bad as they. For grossly illiterate men to preach to artisans is one of the greatest mistakes ever made; but for the outcasts, whose moral perceptions have been blunted until they have scarcely any left—men who are as ignorant as Hottentots, and so depraved that they abhor the light, thinking it to be darkness, none are so well fitted as their own class or as working men. Some of these rough and ready speakers are admirably adapted for this class of work; and their inharmonious voices, somewhat confused modes of thinking, and demonstrative action, do not seem so irreverent and painful as they would be elsewhere. The majority of those who thus labour are respectable Christian artisans. I have met with porters, warehousemen, city clerks, shoemakers, costermongers, and even tradesmen who have, with a spirit of intense desire for the soul-good of the *débris* of society, risked their lives in preaching and conversing about the Saviour of sinners in these pestilential abodes of vice. They do the work far more effectively than paid agents. We would far from depreciate other agencies, but we believe Scripture readers generally lack the *motive* of these voluntary labourers. Indeed, there are too many Church of England Scripture readers, who are as

unfitted for their work as the hurdle-jumping, fox-hunting parsons who hinder instead of help the cause of religion in the country.* The truth is that voluntary agency has overleaped the bounds of conventionality; has spontaneously and vigorously prosecuted work which in its extent and purpose, is not confined within parochial boundaries that have been drawn by the Devil's measuring tapes; and thus has, though quietly and unobtrusively, carved out spheres of Christian usefulness which might not have been otherwise occupied. The object of these voluntary agents is not to put themselves into opposition with existing organisations, to which, in fact, they are often of great assistance; but, they respect no time-honoured privileges, and care little for *districts* (as though God's earth were parcelled out like milkmen's walks, postmen's runs, or policemen's beats, for a number of favoured man-ordained priests). Sometimes they may clash with existing organisations, but if they do, the result is generally to arouse stated missionaries into greater activity. They sometimes act the part of those men who are known in Paris as of "the waker trade," whose duty it is to wake up the sleeping market gardeners, by pinching them on the arm as they are awaiting the early dawn of morning. Dr. Bickersteth, some years ago, uttered a wail of despondency over the labours of those who carry the gospel into low, common lodging houses. He said:—

"Look at the testimony of experience. I appeal to all who have ever laboured in scenes such as these—to our toil-worn parochial clergymen in metropolitan parishes—to our Scripture readers and city missionaries, who have penetrated these haunts of infamy, and who are familiar with these nests of pauperism and vice—I ask if all their labour is not thrown away upon a population so circumstanced? Does not the same state of things go on from year to year? Is there any moral improvement in the mass, so long as the physical condition is unchanged? I have put the question to men who have faithfully toiled for years in these dens of London, and the answer is invariably the same. No general impression is made. Here and there, possibly, one may be roused to some kind of moral perception as by a miracle of mercy, and what happens? Why, the first token of moral life is an attempt to migrate, as though by the instinct of self-preservation, to some purer scene."

There is much truth contained in this language, since the sanitary abominations and repulsive associations of these dens are sufficient to

* Strong language, perhaps; but those of us who know cases in which so-called "clergymen" and their subordinates have refused to visit dying men because they were on the borders of another parish, cannot hate too strongly this parochial system.

do all the good that may be done in them ; but Dr. Bickersteth's experience is not that of hundreds of men who persistently work on, until, by a gracious attrition, the hard stony hearts of some of the vilest are dissolved :

"Dissolved by His goodness they fall to the ground,
And weep to the praise of the mercy they've found."

It is true, that the results are not so visible as in other descriptions of Christian effort ; but so much the more honourable is the zeal of those who labour on irrespective of results. The cases are few in which these pariahs become Christians ; but when they do, they, first of all, invariably by the aid of their spiritual teachers, obtain some decent employment, and live in more wholesome dwellings. But the seed of divine truth is scattered abroad, and therein we do rejoice. The lessons taught are not altogether forgotten. They are remembered after many days. The death-bed reveals the results of lodging-house preaching.

CHAPTER XX.

AMONG THE SPITALFIELDS LODGING-HOUSES,

A few Sabbath evenings ago the writer perambulated a low district in Spitalfields, in company with a friend whose leisure hours, should God approve, are to be devoted to home-mission work. We were in the midst of the lodging-houses of a thickly populated part of London. Within a certain radius, there were no signs of well-housed respectability. The nest of houses, where the seat of overcrowding and disease may be found, was fringed with dark frowning warehouses which emitted other than fragrant odours. Behind these hives of industry might be seen rows and rows of demented hovels, swarming with human life. The streets were crowded with children, some ragged and tattered, others trimmed with finery of variegated hues, while many, half naked and filthy, were frolicking and running, gambling and fighting, swearing and blaspheming. Those who know anything of poor neighbourhoods will have observed the crowds of *gamins* which, on Sundays especially, infest the streets and alleys. The poor cannot afford to pay for the use of those refuges for troublesome children known as dame schools, on the week-day ; ragged schools are hardly aristocratic enough ; while the Sabbath school

might have many diminutive social tyrants but for that strong repugnance to education, and that all-conquering spiteful determination and obstinacy which boys brought up in the midst of evil associations display when overtures are made for their good. He who wishes for a proof of human depravity, and the existence of early iniquity, has only to walk through a miserable neighbourhood and watch the actions of children who have not even seen three summers.

At the corner of each street, there were groups of women evidently discussing their individual grievances, while at the doorways of most houses you might see both women and children sitting and rolling, laughing and vacantly looking on passers-by. You may pass through some of those thoroughfares—I saw no policeman in them—without molestation; but should you be respectably attired, you may be welcomed or dismissed with a laugh or a contemptuous, semi-mystified sneer. We, on returning home, were bidden to go to Jerusalem, by a couple of big lads of the costermonger class: but though we knew of a saying recommending disagreeable people to go to a West of England town noted for its mineral waters, we were not prepared to divine the reason why so uncomfortably distant a city as Jerusalem should have been selected for the banishment of such amiable people as ourselves. At the corner of one street, there was a knot of anxious-looking noisy hobbledoys playing for money. They had formed a semicircle, into the sacred limits of which no one but those engaged in the game were apparently allowed to enter. My friend pulled out his tracts—always useful are these tracts in low neighbourhoods—and ventured amongst the Sabbath-breakers. Although deeply and excitingly engaged in their game, they manifested a sort of anxiety to receive a tract each, which they took with a mixed look of surprise and stupidity, gazing as though our friend were some specially-consecrated and wonderful human curiosity, half doubting whether he might not be paid for his trouble by some one more religious than themselves. For this question of pay, I may say in a parenthesis, is one involving serious considerations amongst the roughs. They are slow in understanding the willingness of service, and they manifest—at least many do—great repugnance to accepting a leaflet at the hands of a salaried missionary. It is different, however, if they think the offer is made by a volunteer. For though they hate tracts, because they are given by persons who would refuse to “stand half

a pint" of liquor, they are not altogether insensible of the worthiness of self-devotion. The young fellows were amiable rather than otherwise; and our friend in giving them a tract entitled "How to make your fortune" advised them, as they seemed bent on making gains by gambling, to read how to gain an everlasting fortune. There was a hearty jovial laugh at this advice; one protested that he was trying to get a dinner out of "Jem;" while the others read the title of their leaflet, doubled it up, placed it in the palm of their hand, and returned to their amusement. I feel persuaded, however, that that simple service will not altogether be without its reward. These men have immortal souls, and should therefore be cared for; they have sympathies, though intensely rude and blunted, and by perseverance and judicious conversation, those sympathies might be evoked for holiness and truth.

I can hardly commit myself to a description of the lodging-houses of Spitalfields. Those I saw might be compared, in ground plan, to an ordinary gridiron, without the handle, the bars being the courts and alleys. These are clustered thickly together; the back gardens (of a few feet in length) having the appearance of piggeries. The houses and dens are occupied by beggars, thieves, tramps, and the street folks of whose mental and physical condition I may say most miserable. We feared to penetrate into the maze of courts and alleys which lie beyond those in the immediate vicinity of the Gospel Hall, into which we proposed entering; and I should not advise any one with a delicate constitution to venture into such scenes of filth and disease. At the end of the street we observed an open-air preacher holding forth to three persons, two of whom were children. The solitary man was a tramp—he may have been a thief, but we did not go near enough to personally know—lounging against a doorway, but manifesting in his broad German-looking visage no ray of intelligence, no manifestation of understanding the words uttered by the energetic speaker. Saddened we turned aside, and made enquiries for the Gospel Hall.

"You are one of the obstinate fellows I ever met with," said an old woman to my friend, abruptly grasping him by the arm, as we were pacing over the brick floor of the Gospel Hall.

"Why? Have I done anything wrong to you?"

"Why! Last night you made me out to be one of the vilest women in the Metropolitan Tabernacle."

"Madame, I don't know you; I don't remember ever seeing you before."

"Never saw me before! Last night you never kept your eyes off me a moment. I would have thought nothing of it, had you come and told me by myself, but to do it before a' yon folk—'twas too bad."

"Where do you live?" asked my friend, "and I'll go and see you;" for by this time a crowd had gathered on the aisle.

"Come awa', then," was her immediate reply; and leading him to a narrow dirty lane, she ushered him into a dirty hovel, full of smoke. "This," said she, the moment they entered, to her husband, who was sitting by the fire, "this is the man who gave me such a *redding up* last night." "But is what I said true?" asked my friend, mildly, after they had sat down upon two rickety stools, which, with that on which the husband was sitting, composed the chief articles of furniture in the apartment.

"True! It was all true; but if you hadn't been going about among the neighbours, you never could have known what you said."

"Well, what is it I have said that has given you such offence?"

"Said? I'm sure all you said was meant for me."

"How do you think that? I never named you; as I said before, I didn't so much as know you."

"What? you never took your eyes off me all the time you were speaking; so you just meant me."

"But tell me what struck you most?"

"You said that I was a liar, and that I should be cast into hell."

"Well, then, are you a liar?"

"Yes, I am."

"What kind of life have you been living?"

"Oh!" she said, with a tone of deepened feeling, "I've been living a wery bad, bad life; I've for many years been a *fortune-teller*, and I may say I've made my bread by telling fortunes; and that's just telling lies, you know."

"Well, then, you needn't be saying that I said so. But let me tell you, that it wasn't my words that I spoke to you, it was God's words, and he knows your every thought, and every word you speak."

He read to her Rev. XXI. 8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." "If you continue in that sin," said he, "believe me, you will never enter heaven."

He next read Rev. XXII. 11: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still . . . And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whore-mongers, and murderers, and liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

"Now, it is the Lord Jesus," he added, "who says all this, and not I."

"I see you are right," replied the woman, in a tone more and more subdued; "I'm no less a sinner than you said I was. But what is to become of me?"

"There's nothing for you, but to go to Jesus."

"But will he take such a wretch as I? Oh, I *am* a great sinner! And oh, Billy," she added, turning to her husband, in evident concern, "you're no better than I; I doubt but we'll both be cast down into hell."

"It really doesn't look well," said the husband, shaking his head, significantly, as if himself beginning to be alarmed also.

"But, sir, do you think," asked the woman, "that Jesus would take *such* sinners?"

"Yes," said my friend, opening his Bible, "it is written in this book, 'Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins *shall* have mercy,' Prov. XXVIII. 13. 'Have you a Bible in the house?'"

"Oh! no; we have none."

"Do you ever go to church?"

"Never; I haven't had my foot within a church door for sixteen years, till last Sunday that I heard Mr. Spurgeon in the Tabernacle. But I'll come and hear you. Have you any church?"

He told her he had no church in London, but she might attend Grove Road Chapel each Sunday night.

From that day the woman gave up her fortune-telling. Along with her husband she attended on every Sunday night the service in the Grove Road Chapel. They got a Bible, and read it, and prayed over it. A great change came over their whole life.

The husband lived for some years, giving marked evidence of his interest in Christ. "Oh! had you not come to my house that day with my wife," he used often to say to the missionary, "and had she not gone to the meeting where she thought you exposed her so much, I'm sure we should both have gone down into hell, for oh! we lived a sad life of sin: but since that we have had great peace and comfort, even when we had little to eat, for that little had God's blessing with it."

CHAPTER XXI.

STRAY THOUGHTS.

THE HABIT OF DRUNKENNESS.—The use of spirituous liquors is becoming a very common habit among the natives of England. Yes, it is unquestionably true that the great increase in the sales of liquor by retail spirit-sellers is very largely referable to what may be styled the habit of drunkenness: and it is fully as frequent among men in society as it is with women, whose nerves are over-taxed by hard work and protracted illness. And I may say to every one, though many will dispute it, that the habit of drunkenness, in its ravages, when once thoroughly established, is more difficult to break, and more dangerous in every respect, than the habitual use of opium or its preparations. Few, save practising physicians, are aware of the tremendous effects of alcoholic liquor upon a person's system. As you know, depending upon the quantity taken, liquor possesses four very distinct properties, being in very small doses a tonic and nervine, in moderate doses directly stimulant, in large doses sedative and soporific, and in very large doses intoxicating, producing drunkenness, similar in its features to masked epilepsy, in which, while performing customary actions and talking with the coherence of a person in the full possession of his senses, the victim is really perfectly unconscious of what he is doing, and totally irresponsible. There is no question that the regular use of liquor as a stimulant is rapidly increasing among the educated men—the fact is one of the most

lamentable that has come under my notice for years. The way in which a man gets into it in the first place is very simple. He feels a little unstrung and out of tune perhaps, and so consults the family physician, who suggests a glass or two of port or brandy. In a day or two he feels singularly improved; his brain is clear and bright; the physical energies seem to have renewed their youth. Elated with the results whenever he feels down-spirited or out of sorts, he resorts, of course, to the remedy that has once served his purpose so well; and very soon he has acquired the habit of using the spirit or poison in regular daily doses. In three months, so insidious are its effects, the habit of drinking is fully established, and the probability is that the man (or woman, as the case may be) has not long to live. Worse still, so peculiar are the effects of the liquor on the nervous system, that there is a strong probability that the victim will die of suicide, for it is a singular fact that no tonic in the *Materia Medica* acts so directly and rapidly to produce suicidal disposition and impulse. Morphia has no such effect, deplorable as its ravages are.

The habit of drunkenness generally transforms the most truthful and moral man or woman into the most inveterate liar and immoral person; in the course of two or three years – a romancer of the wildest type. On the other hand, while morphia produces no perceptible effect on veracity, it leads to a nervous irritability that is intolerable alike to its victim and his associates, and frequently ends in the sudden development of suicidal mania.

Again, a man may be reduced to the verge of the grave by spirituous liquors, and still retain a remnant of physical and nervous energy, when the poisonous liquor has been eliminated from the system; but when once the system has given way under the cumulative influence of liquor, the break down is irrevocable.

In the course of an experience, embracing, I may say, a thousand cases of the drunken habit in its later stages, during the last three years, I have never seen a case in which the victim was good for anything after the habit was broken, and as a rule, the victim collapses and dies if the withdrawal of the stimulant is persevered in. Knowing these facts, cannot educated men abstain from drink, and punish the physician who prescribes brandy or any kind of
to men a little fagged out with over-work?

THE DRUNKARD.—The victim of liquor is now a homeless beggar, squatting in some out-of-the-way corner, and dependent upon charity for a morsel of bread. His unshaven head well agrees with the general squalor of his appearance, and the ground is now his only bed and table. His sole remaining possessions are his brandy-bottle and a tobacco-pipe. Some compassionate person, perhaps a former farm-servant, is bringing him a small flattened loaf. This misery and destitution are the consequences of Government greed and wrong-doing. England would be none the poorer were all alcoholic beverages destroyed to-morrow.

It is admitted on all hands that drunkenness is a terrible and prevalent evil in the land. Judges, statesmen, magistrates—all the most intelligent men in the community—are of one accord in the matter. In many foreign lands the name of "Englishman" has almost become a synonym for "drunkard."

Drunkard treats his wife, son and daughter with the most barbarous cruelty; and even if he allow them to survive, a terrible time of pain is awaiting them.

ENGLISH HONOUR.—What is English honour? Is it illustrated and glorified by the massing of men and warlike materials to crush weak foes? No one can doubt the issue of a war either in Afghanistan or in Africa, if such a nation as England chooses to exercise its force. Whatever reverses may occur, unless some very unusual interference take place, a great power will in process of time stamp out a weaker one. Surely, however, English people have not yet reached that depth of degradation in which brute strength seems admirable and worshipped. And yet—and yet—at all events we must testify that "righteousness exalteth a nation," and that England's honour is to be manifested only in truth, justice, and loving ministry of mercy, but not in the encouragement of liquor traffic, licensed prostitution, and crushing weak foes.

ENGLAND'S MISSION.—England's mission in the world is to spread civilization, to abolish tyranny and all the monstrous ills of slavery and vice. For this cause has God raised her up. But England is responsible to God and to the nation for the tremendous vice of drunkenness which she has spread throughout the length and breadth of her empire by licensed liquor traffic.

"English Tradesmen.—I condemn the mode of conducting business which prevails among thousands of shopkeepers throughout the length and breadth of England. From facts which come to my ears during my stay in that country, it is clear, that these men often apparently respectable, and even make a decided profession of religion—keep young persons of both sexes in their establishments habitually *to lie for them*: On one occasion a young man said, "I will tell the truth for one day, and see how it will answer." The morning came, and a lady presented herself at the shop, and asked for an article." "Is it pure wool?" was her inquiry.

"No, ma'am; there is a mixture of cotton in it." On hearing this, the lady quitted the shop without purchasing; and that very night the young man was discharged!

But all the sin does not lie at the door of tradesmen. The customers who are not content to pay a fair price for a genuine article offer a premium on adulteration and imitation, and are accessories to the evil above referred to. Some Christians are mean to their tradesmen in order that they may be generous to the poor. Is not this robbery for burnt offering?

The clergy of the Church of England, and ministers of all denominations alike, are *too timid* to deal with the great questions of the day, and this very important one in particular. They tell you they would "give offence," would "empty their church," and so forth. One minister, being asked one day plainly by an attendant at his church, "Is a *business lie* as bad any other lie?" replied, "he could not answer that question; he really did not know." Both in churches and chapels these great questions are shirked and avoided, and the Word of God is handled deceitfully when practical matters have to be grappled with.

NOVEL-READING.—Facts are stubborn things. Here is one. From two free libraries in London during the year 1884, 327,813 volumes of *fiction* were taken out, and in the same period the total of all other kinds of works taken out from the same two libraries numbered only 113,391 volumes. Will it be healthy for the national life that it should so abundantly feed on the sudden surprises, the exaggerations, the dramatic situations, the questionable morality, and the too prevailing godlessness of the modern novel?

"ONE SWEET KISS BEFORE WE PART."—A young lady having

"I bought a lot of articles in a shop, on returning to her carriage, recollected a piece she had forgotten to buy. "Sir," said she, on re-entering the shop, "there is one thing which I had forgotten!" "And what is that?" replied the young shop-boy. "One sweet kiss before we part." The jolly youth, jumping immediately over the table, gave a sweet kiss to the fair customer.

WANTED A WIFE.—She is very much like the rose; very long in the neck, narrow in the shoulders; slender in the waist; thin in the legs, and short in stature; nose very sharp, and eyes very blue; lips very thin and very red; hair glossy and copper-coloured; she will go to market herself and keep all the money. Eats and drinks a little, and pits very elegant.

WANTED A HUSBAND.—A modern Anglican of the Anglicans, nursed in rising Radicalism, and cradled in the pride of place, educated at Oxford, well read in novels, versed in London business, and acquainted with trade and commerce; income not less than £50 a month, a man of good family, who can love sincerely

CHAPTER XXII.

ENGLISH SOCIETY AND ENGLISH CHARACTER.

ENGLISH SOCIETY.—English Society in its present state offers a subject for consideration which is rather amusing than edifying. A wide-spread depravity of a most harrowing character exists in it. It consists of much that is good and noble, and more that is bad and trifling, much that we envy, much that we condemn and weep for.

Mirth and happiness are as sweet to me as the perfume of roses, or the ripple of the cooling brooks in the heat of harvest, I would as soon rob the year of its summer, and the heavens of the sun, as young people of their merriment, or old people of their joys. But I am a plain man, loving consistency, and therefore a great Christian nation's ways of mirth considerably puzzle me, and make me think very queer thoughts when I adorn my brow with my considering cap. The young lambs overflow with spirits, and are abundantly frolicsome and lively in their play, and yet I never saw them eat carrion for a treat, or howl like tigers for a change: their enjoyments are always like their nature, and they never imitate

wolves or lions in order to enjoy themselves. Let a horse loose, and it gallops and tears round the meadow, and rolls on its back, and throws up its leg into the air; but still it acts like a horse, and does not for pleasure try to fly like a bird, or climb a tree like a squirrel. How is it, then, that a great people, who call themselves Christians, the moment they set about enjoying themselves, throw off their supposed spiritual nature, and act like worldlings in order to be happy? Other creatures, even in their freest sports, are like themselves, but these beings in their pleasure seeking are as unlike what they profess to be as owls are unlike birds of Paradise! The nostril that can be gratified by the reek of dunghills, knows nothing of true fragrance. To genuine virtuous men the painted joys of earth are too vapid, too childish, too mean, to give them a moment's satisfaction. To me it is a wonder that English people who retain the Christian name, and yet find solace in those poisonous pastures which border on the plains of vice, and are the purheus of hell. •

Thus and thus is it with the English world everywhere and evermore. Far away and outside the English world is harmony and delight, nearer and more closely known it is horror and confusion. To the young and inexperienced, the cadence sweet of love and mirth is rapture, and the towers of English world ring out a concert, filling hope with transport, but when experience has brought the man into the very city of life, he hears a terrible concert. He is startled by mighty knells; wearied with piercing tones of care; and worried out of hope, as with mournful accents, troubles cleave the air, and the crazing clamours of peals of controversy, bobmajors of nonsense, and chimes of slander, brighten sacred quiet from the scene, and sound a hideous requiem to peace. "Things are not what they seem." From afar, society is full of friendship; nearer, it is hollow and hypocritical; pleasure dreamed of is Elysium, but, mingled in, too much of it is Gehenna; philosophy seems deep and solid at a distance, but searched with care, it is proven to be vapid and pretentious. All the world's a mirage; heaven alone is real.

Alas! behold English Society as a repository of social influences and pleasures—her alliance with the club-room and play-house, behold her feasting and rioting with the world—her literary, musical, dramatic entertainments, which engross so much of her life.

and almost characterizes her as a "Bureau of Amusements" for the world, which corrupt the moral principle, and cultivate the spirit that leads the young people in merry throngs to the theatre, the ball-room, and other sinful pleasures, thus helping on the world's mad frolic to judgment and perdition.

In the midst of this manifest apostacy we hear vain boastings of improvement and progress, and expressions of contempt for those who see these evils and weep over them in secret places. Sad picture! indeed! Sad, because so true! Deluded or dishonest men may easily hold up this picture to popular ridicule and scorn.

To me, English Society presents a huge sham—heartless and hypocritical—its principles are false, its pretensions shallow, and its big dinners and big parties veritable frauds!

ENGLISH CHARACTER.—There are many wonders in the world which prompt the cry, "Behold!" There are *wonders in nature*: the towering Himalayas, clothed with eternal snow; the foaming cataract of Niagara, which excites the amazement of the dullest beholder. There are *wonders of art*—the Pyramids of Gizeh, in the land of Egypt, seen from afar; the steam-engine, with its strange irresistible power. There are *wonders of genius*—the genius of Milton; the discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton, of James Watt—these draw the admiration of every intelligent mind. The world is full of the cry, "Behold!" "Behold!" But who admires the *wonders of England*—in every form of human wickedness and depravity.

To form a just estimate of the English people we ought to have more than a mere acquaintance with them as they are, we require some knowledge of the events that have raised them to their present state, and of the Government that every day moulds their thoughts. The ancient Saxon element, already reduced in number, was to a great extent, absorbed by the Norman element.

Notwithstanding all the advantages and disadvantages of their positions,¹ both past and present, the English are a remarkable people. They are intelligent, industrious, enterprising, bold, possessed of a strong, resolute character. Intelligent and bold, they are obedient to their parents, but they are intemperate in food and drink, and cold in manners. While murders, crimes, debaucheries and drunkenness are frequent and
Such is a brief summary of the moral qualities of the

English people, and it is concurred in by all who have had sufficient opportunities of forming a judgment. As regards this aspect of English moral life, it is certain that whatever may be the conception which should fitly be put upon this and other singular customs among this people, they are no strangers to the vice found among the French and the Germans. This is, indeed, apparent enough on the surface. Whether they are different in kind, or worse in degree, is the question; and whether such customs, which may be the result of greater depravity, are the true indications of its existence! This is by no means so simple a question as may appear. Where, from custom no sense of immodesty attaches to a particular costume or habit, we know very well the utmost purity of thought may be compatible with its adoption.

The sense of wrong-doing and condemnation in *fero conscientia* must, in a great measure, determine the question of immodesty, or, at all events, enter far more largely into the determining of character than at first sight appears. It is difficult to form an opinion of the morality of one people by the standard of another. The Hindus and the Mahomedans think it a reproach for women to be seen out of their harems, and, even among the lower classes, the unveiling of the face is regarded as a shameless and indecent act, associating with it corresponding ideas of immorality. Singularly enough, we seem to have some traces of this conception when we wish to express a similar reproach of shamelessness by the word *barefaced*. A Hindu woman wears a single *saree*, but carefully shrouds her whole body from view. The English women expose their faces and breasts without reserve, and paint the former that they may be admired; while they very certainly regard their dress—their dancing in public, with their male acquaintances, and our whole system of visiting, as the most shocking departures from all the rules of propriety and decency, which the imagination of man or woman could invent.

The English people are not very pleasant in company, as some people are, because they do not like strangers, nor care much for giving themselves trouble. They like best being at home, and that is a good thing. They do not so much care about their houses and furniture looking pretty, as about their being clean and comfortable. They are very much afraid of being cheated; therefore they are

cautious and prudent, and slow to trust people till they know them, they are, as a rule, cold in their manners, but they have warm hearts, and will do kind things. They are industrious, for they like to get money. Indeed they are too fond of money, as well as of good eating and drinking. They like reading, especially newspapers and light and amusing books. They do not care much for music and painting, as some people do. They are rather given to low spirits, and are apt to grumble, complaining of the weather, of their rulers, and of all kinds of things, and wishing that they were richer than they are, yet they ought to be best, as well as the happiest people in the world, for there is no country in which there are so many Bibles. Even children of five and six years old have Bibles of their own in England.

THE END.



